# HILDEGARD OF BINGEN : THE PSYCHOLOGICAL AND SOCIAL USES OF PROPHECY

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# ABSTRACT


## Hildegard of Bingen: the psychological and social uses of prophecy

The space commanded by Hildegard of Bingen in the Patrologia Latina is but one indication of her unique position among twelfth-century women. This thesis examines her life and writings in an attempt to explain how she was able to gain recognition in fields generally unfrequented by women.

The opening chapters establish the outlines of her life and subsequent attempts to interpret it. When these accounts are found wanting, the attitudes of Hildegard's contemporaries are investigated. An examination of her correspondence which takes up the greater part of chapter three reveals her widely-accepted status as a prophet.

The next chapters are concerned with the advantages of Hildegard's assuming a prophetic role and discuss the subordinate place of women in contemporary structures of knowledge and authority, as well as the use Hildegard made of the prophetic persona in her writings and life. The final chapter seeks to expose the physiological and psychological bases of her prophetic beliefs and suggest an alternative, secular interpretation of Hildegard's achievements. A translation of Hildegar d's Vita from Ms B (Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Stiftung Preussische Kulturbesitz, Cod. Lat. 4o, 674), forms an appendix to the thesis.

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any University, and to the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis. I consent to the thesis being made available for photocopying and loan if accepted for the award of the degree.

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## Abbreviations

| | |
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| AASS | Acta Sanctorum |
| AB | Analecta Bollandiana |
| Acht | P. Acht (ed.) Mainzer Urkundenbuch (Darmstadt, 1972) |
| Archiv. f.mrh. K. | Archiv für mittelrheinische Kirchengeschichte |
| Briefwechsel | Hildegard von Bingen, Briefwechsel, tr. A. Führkötter (Salzburg, 1965) |
| Bruder | P. Bruder, 'Acta Inquisitionis de virtutibus et miraculis S. Hildegardis' AB 2 (1883) 116-129 |
| CCCM | Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis |
| 'Commentarius' | J. Stilting, 'De S. Hildegarde Virgine...Commentarius Praevius', AASS XVII Septembris, 629-769 |
| 'Collaborateurs' | H. Herwegen, 'Les Collaborateurs de Sainte Hildegarde' Revue Bénédictine 21 (1904) 192-203, 302-315, 381-403 |
| Das Leben | Das Leben der Heiligen Hildegard, tr. A. Führkötter2nd edn. (Salzburg, 1980) |
| EETS | Early English Text Society |
| Echtheit | M. Schrader, A. Führkötter, Die Echtheit des Schrifttums der heiligen Hildegard von Bingen (Köln-Graz, 1956) |
| Festschrift | A. Bruck (ed), Hildegard von Bingen 1179-1979. Festschrift zum 800. Todestag der Heiligen (Mainz, 1979) |
| 'Genesis' | A. Derolez, 'The Genesis of Hildegard of Bingen's "Liber divinorum operum". The Codicological Evidence' Litterae Textuales 2 (1972) 23-33 |
| Kaiser | P. Kaiser (ed.) Hildegardis Causae et Curae (Leipzig, 1903) |
| LLDG | J. Leclercq, The Love of Learning and the Desire for God tr. C. Misrahi. 2nd edn. (London, 1978) |
| MGH | Monumenta Germaniae Historica |

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| MS | Mediaeval Studies |
| PAPV | Pierre Abélard, Pierre le Vénérable (Paris, 1975) |
| Pitra | Analecta Sacra VIII: Sanctae Hildegardis Opera, ed. J. B. Pitra (Monte Cassino, 1882) |
| PL | Patrologia Latina |
| 'Problemata' | P. Dronke, 'Problemata Hildegardiana', Mittellateinisches Jahrbuch 16 (1981) 97-113 |
| RB | Revue Bénédictine |
| R&R | R. Benson and G. Constable, Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century (Oxford, 1982) |
| Scivias | Hildegardis Scivias, ed. A. Führkötter, A. Carlevaris (CCCM 43, 43A, Turnhout, 1978) |
| St.MGBO | Studien und Mitteilungen zur Geschichte des Benediktiner-Ordens und seiner Zweige |
| 'Views' | C. Singer, 'The Scientific Views and Visions of Saint Hildegard (1098-1180)' in Studies in the History and Method of Science, First Series (Oxford, 1917) 1-59 |
| Visionen | Die Visionen und Briefe der heiligen Elisabeth ed. F.W.E. Roth (Brunn, 1884) |
| WW | P. Dronke, Women Writers of the Middle Ages (Cambridge, 1984) |

# CHAPTER ONE: THE LIFE OF HILDEGARD

> There is ample material for a full biography of Hildegard, and many accounts have appeared of her. Most of them are the work of men devoid of critical judgement and are marked by a desire for edification that neither adds to their attractiveness as literature nor conduces to our assurance of their truthfulness.
>
> Charles Singer, From Magic to Science (New York, 1958)

Singer's assessment of the state of the literature is doubtless based largely on the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century biographies, many of which contrive to be at once turgid and credulous.[1] However it is hardly fair comment on Stilting's 1753 account of Hildegard's life, which represents - and not only for its time - a model of sober historical investigation.[2] Here Stilting established the details of Hildegard's life to the point where further advances in the field had to await the discovery of new evidence in the late nineteenth century.[3] From his eighteenth-century vantage-point he could also write dismissively of the proliferation of vernacular lives:

> Ceterum necesse non est recensere omnes Vitas posterioribus seculis et variis linguis scriptas... At nulla illarum quidam addit ad antiqua documenta praeter errores.[4]

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1. A version of this passage first appeared in Singer's 'Views' in 1917. For a discussion of some of these works, see below, pp. 44f.

2. 'Commentarius'; cf. D. Knowles, Great Historical Enterprises (London, 1962) 1-32.

3. Especially the additional letters printed in Pitra, passim.

4. 'Commentarius', 631.

What Stilting meant by the 'antiqua documenta' is not entirely clear. There is, for example, some difficulty about assigning Trithemius a place in the schema.[5] It is probable, however, that Stilting was referring chiefly to works which were more nearly contemporary with Hildegard's life, and which may be loosely characterised as narrative sources, documentary evidence, Hildegard's correspondence and miscellaneous autobiographical passages.[6]

i. Materials for Hildegard's biography.

The most important source for Hildegard's biography, Vita Hildegardis, by the monks Godfrey and Theodoric, is to be classed with the narrative sources.[7] It contains in outline almost all that is known

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5. Johannes Trithemius (1462-1516), abbot of Spanheim and later of St Jakob at Würzburg, mentions Hildegard extensively in his Annales Hirsaugienses, Annales Sponheimensis and De Scriptoribus Ecclesiasticis. Although Trithemius had been to Rupertsberg and possessed a copy (now BL Ms Add. 15102) made from the Riesenkodex, he is responsible for the introduction of several spurious pieces of information, e.g. the visit of St Bernard to Hildegard at Rupertsberg.

6. Neither Trithemius nor Stilting seems to have made much use of the second source, although archives were kept at Bingen in Trithemius' time, if not Stilting's.

7. See Echtheit, 11-12. I have consulted microfilm copies of five manuscripts: Wiesbaden, Hessische Landesbibliothek Hs 2 (Riesenkodex: Ms R), f.317r-327v; Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Stiftung Preussische Kulturbesitz. Cod lat 4o, 674 (Ms B), f.1r-24v; London, BL. Ms Add. 15102 (A copy made for Trithemius from the Riesenkodex in 1487) and two manuscripts originally from Gembloux: Brussel s, Bibliothèque Royale, Cod. 5387-96 (Ms G), f.154v-173v and 5527-34 (Ms Gl.), f.191v-209v. Since the text printed in AASS 17 Sept. could hardly be called a critical edition, and its reprinting in PL197 was accompanied by the usual mixture of error and ommission, I shall quote from the manuscript closest to the original form of the work (Ms B), which appears below, with my translation: see Appendix.

about her, the major exception being her dispute with the clergy of Mainz concerning the burial of an excommunicate.[8] The Vita was begun in the last years of Hildegard's life by the monk Godfrey of Disibodenberg, during his time as Provost of Rupertsberg, a position he took up in late 1174. He managed to write only the first book before his death at the beginning of 1176. The work was completed by Theodoric of Echternach between 1180 and 1190.[9] The only record of Theodoric's ever having visited the Rupertsberg comes from the Acta.[10] The abbots who commissioned him to complete the Vita, on the other hand, Ludwig and Godfrey, were both closely connected with Hildegard. Letters attesting to particularly close ties between Hildegard and the monastery of St Eucharius at Trier are found among her correspondence.[11] Since both abbots, at different times, combined the abbacy of Trier with that of Echternach, the choice of Theodoric to complete the Vita seems to have been made for considerations of literary merit, rather than particular knowledge of the subject.[12]

It hardly needs to be pointed out that a medieval saint's Life cannot be read as if it were a modern biography. Even if the work were not written explicitly as part of a canonisation campaign, every

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8. See below pp. 200ff.

9. Theodoric is more famous as the author of the 'Codex Aureus' of Echternach, for which see Monumenta Epternacensia, MGH ss. XXIII 11ff.

10. See below p. 8.

11. See Briefwechsel, 154-163.

12. Ludwig was Abbot of St Eucharius of Trier 1168-1188 and Abbot of Echternach from 1173-1181. Godfrey, a former monk of St Eucharius, was Abbot of Echternach from 1181-1210, and Abbot of St Eucharius from 1190-1210.

saint's Life or putative saint's Life was by its very nature tendentious.[13] While such a bias is only to be expected, it seems that the *Vita* as we have it has also suffered editorial interference from at least one of its commissioners. Apparently Godfrey, wishing to spare his readers *longueurs* (a desire more often expressed than acted upon in medieval writings) undertook to omit certain parts of the *Vita*.[14] Unfortunately it is impossible to determine the kind of material that was omitted. It is quite likely that flights of rhetoric would have been retained in preference to circumstantial details of Hildegard's life. On the other hand, the *Vita* was partly written by someone who had spent some time in personal contact with Hildegard, and overseen by others who also knew her.[15] Moreover, the authors were able to incorporate material from various written sources into the narrative, often as direct quotations. Such material includes letters, autobiographical passages from Hildegard's works and

13. On this see the works of Jean Leclercq, esp. *Nouveau visage de Bernard de Clairvaux* (Paris, 1976) and 'Modern Psychology and the Interpretation of Medieval Texts', *Speculum* 48 (1973) 476. For the canonisation process see E. W. Kemp, *Canonization and Authority in the Western Church* (Oxford, 1948) and R. Foreville, *Un Procès de Canonisation à L'aube du XIII siècle* (Paris, 1943).

14. See his letter to the Flemish monk Guibert of Gembloux, Hildegard's secretary at the time of her death, in which he says:'... in qua plura, ex scitu nostro et consilio propter fastidium longae lectionis omissa sunt': *AB* I (1882) 605, and Guibert's comments on the same theme in Pitra, 413.

15. It is unclear what should be made of Guibert of Gembloux's assurance that he had found nothing to alter or add to the work - 'Relegi enim seriatim et attente totum descriptionis ejusdem textum, et non habens prae memoria quid inferrem vel adderem, nec invencius in ea quicquam superfluum quod demerem, neque aliquid inepte positum quod corrigerem, omnia ut inveni sic reliqui, ne inferior superioribus me jactanter praeferre viderer': *AB* I (1882) 607 - in the light of his request for information about Hildegard's birthplace and parentage, which was the occasion of Godfrey's sending him the *Vita* for comment.

other autobiographical fragments which are preserved only in the Vita. Although these fragments are sometimes referred to as Hildegard's 'spiritual diary', they bear all the marks of reminiscences, rather than day-to-day reporting.[16] These last and most interesting inclusions possibly formed part of an earlier Life which is now lost. Guibert of Gembloux claims that Hildegard's first and most important collaborater, the monk Volmar of Disibodenberg, wrote such a life.[17] While the preservation of these fragments in the Vita is of vital importance, the incorporation of material still extant in other forms, such as letters, although reassuring in terms of historical methodology, tends to reduce the actual stock of recorded data about Hildegard's life.

Guibert himself planned to write Hildegard's biography. The fragmentary version printed by Pitra seems to represent the greater part of what he produced.[18] It seems likely that Guibert began the work at Rupertsberg shortly after Hildegard's death, since he explained in the letter to Philipp of Cologne, already mentioned, that he had refrained from doing so in Hildegard's lifetime since 'id magis

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16. So Derolez refers to some of this material as 'from a diary note' in 'Genesis' 30, probably echoing 'Tagebuch' in F.W.E. Roth, 'Studien zur Lebensbeschreibung der heiligen Hildegard', StMGBO 39 (1918) 70, but for the contrary view see WW, 159.

17. See the letter of Guibert to Philipp of Heinsberg, Archbishop of Cologne: AB I (1882) 600-605.

18. Pitra, 407-415. The work breaks off in mid-sentence at the point where Hildegard has the Scivias revelation, yet Guibert mentions in his letter to Godfrey, that he described Hildegard's life up to the move to Rupertsberg. Hereafter referred to as Guibert's 'Life'.

adulationi applicaretur quam devotioni, et ne etiam ipsa suis forte laudibimus gravaretur'.[19]

Although Guibert's Life provides some detail not found elsewhere - notably the fact that Hildegard was the tenth child of her parents and thus offered to the church as a tithe - on the whole the impression given is one of a reworking of the material found in the first book of Godfrey and Theodoric's Vita. It is possible that this was the work he referred to as that of Volmar, in the letter mentioned above. Since, however, Guibert knew that Volmar was Hildegard's first collaborator he must have been wrongly informed about the authorship of the work. A difficulty with this hypothesis is that Guibert apparently did not know the details of Hildegard's parents or place of birth.[20] The names of her parents could have been ascertained from the Vita, although this does not give the town. It is conceivable that Guibert had sufficient knowledge of the former work to fix the general outline in his mind, without being able to remember all the details.

Some other elements suggest an acquaintance with the Annales St Disibodi, something he may have had access to when he was Provost at Rupertsberg.[21] Guibert's work is useful, however, for the light it throws on background material. Whether his description of the enclosure of Jutta and her companions is drawn from life or his

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19. AB I (1882) 603. This statement is rather difficult to reconcile with that in his letter to Godfrey, where he wrote 'cum adhuc Pinguie commorarer...Hildegardis vitam...scribere inchoasse...sed post obitum illius...opus coeptum imperfectum reliquisse': AB I (1882) 607-8.

20. 'Rogo etiam ut nomina patris et matris et villae dominae Hildegardis...notificetis....Scripsi enim de illa aliquid ubi libenter ea inseruissem...': AB I (1882) 606.

21. See below p. 38.

conception of how such rites should be performed remains a matter for speculation. It is, however encouraging to see that his description shares many important features with the ceremony of inclusion in an English pontifical of the twelfth century.[22]

Among the narrative sources for Hildegard's biography are several contemporary or near contemporary chronicles. These include the annals from Disibodenberg, Stade, Pohlde and Zwiefalten, and the chronicle attributed to William Godell, in which the author, an anonymous Cistercian records a visit to Rupertsberg in 1172.[23] With the possible exception of the Annales S. Disibodi these chronicles can only be used to establish Hildegard's contemporary reputation, rather than adding to our knowledge of her life; hence they will be considered in more detail in Chapter III below.[24] So too, the mention of Hildegard in the thirteenth-century Vita Gerlaci should be taken as an indication of her established reputation, rather than as a source of specific information.[25] Here it is claimed that Hildegard sent the hermit Gerlac the coronet which she had worn at her consecration by Archbishop Henry of Mainz, because she had seen in a vision the place

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22. Cf the pontifical in BL Cotton Ms Vespasian Dxv: H.A.Wilson ed. The Pontifical of Magdelen College, Henry Bradshaw Society, XXXIX (1910) Appendix, 245-6.

23. Annales Sancti Disibodi MGH ss.XVII, 4 ff.;Annales Stadensis MGH ss.XVI, 271 ff.; Annales Palidenses MGH ss.XVI, 90 ff.;Annales Zwifaltenses MGH ss.X, 51 ff.; William Godell, MGH ss. XXVI, 198 ff.

24. So also the often-mentioned letter of John of Salisbury to Gerard Pucelle in which Hildegard is named: W. J. Miller and C. N. Brooke edd., The Letters of John of Salisbury. Volume II. The Later Letters (1163-1180) (Oxford, 1979) 222-224.

25. AASS V Januarii, 306-321.

26. ibid., 309.

of honour prepared for him among the confessors.[26] However, Henry of Mainz did not become Archbishop until 1142, when Hildegard had already been a nun for about thirty years. In fact, Hildegard was consecrated by the Bishop of Bamberg, since the incumbent of Mainz, Adalbert, was in prison.[27]

The Annales S. Disibodi present problems of a different kind. While useful as a background for the physical conditions of Hildegard's early life - great attention being given to the ambitious building project carried out during these years - it is curiously reticent about Hildegard herself. There is more about Jutta than her illustrious pupil. The entry for 1136, after noting the death of Abbot Fulchard and the succession of Cuno continues:

> Eodem anno 11 Kal. Ianuarii obiit divae memoriae domna Iudda, 24 annis in monte sancti Dysibodi inclusa, soror Megenhardi comitis de Spanheim. Haec sancta mulier inclusa est Kalend. Novembris, et aliae tres cum ea, scilicet Hyldegardis et suimet vocabuli duae; quas etiam, quoad vixit, sanctis virtutibus imbuere studuit.[28]

As Stilting noted, this passage raises several problems of dating, and should thus be used with caution.[29]

As a bridge between the narrative and documentary evidence the Acta Inquisitionis can be cited.[30] Whatever judgment may be made about the impartiality of the various Lives of Hildegard, the Acta by its very

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27. The information comes from eight lessons from Gembloux found in Ms G, f.209: 'postea suscepit sacrum velamen per manus venerabilis bauenbergensis episcopi...'. See also Pitra, 434.

28. ASD, 25.

29. 'Commentarius', 632. For further discussion, see below pp.29f.

30. Also known as the Protocollum canonisationis, hereafter referred to as the 'Acta'.

nature is a vehicle for special pleading, a circumstance which is perhaps not adequately compensated for by the fact that its contents are the depositions of sworn witnesses. Until 1883 the only printed text of this document was the very imperfect one in AASS XVII Septembris, reproduced in PL197.[31] However, in 1882 the original instrument was discovered in the archives of Coblenz, where most of the documents from Rupertsberg were finally housed.[32] The Acta was written on a sheet of parchment measuring .78 x .25m and still had three seals attached to it when discovered by Bruder. Dated 16 December 1233, it was written by three canons of Mainz at the request of Pope Gregory IX, to whom it was duly sent; having then been found lacking in rigour and detail it was returned and a new submission sought. The document contains fifty-three interlinear additions and forty-two half lines of additional material post-dating the events of the original submission. Whether these alterations were made in 1237 or later, the amended version does not seem to have reached the Curia, as a further letter from Innocent IV, dated 1243, asks for a resubmission.[33] Although the terms of Gregory IX's commission were to

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31. This was based on a manuscript from the Augustinian canonry of Bodecenis in Padeborn; see 'Commentarius', 630.

32. Now Abt. 164, Nr. 14 in the Hauptstaatsarchiv at Coblenz.

33. Schrader and Führkötter assert that the Acta 'wurde 1233 und 1237 abgefasst'(Echtheit, 13) which would mean that it was altered as soon as the first papal rejection was received. Bruder, however, on the evidence of Innocent IV's request dates the alterations from 1243 - 'Innocentum IV cui secunda forma relationis de miraculis... S.Hildegardis parata fuit...': Bruder, 129. Failing further outside evidence there is no way of resolving this difference of opinion, since the document may have been altered in 1237 and not sent on, or, alternatively, not altered at all until 1243. It may be mere coincidence that the original text took six years to appear after the first papal letter (1227-1233), and there is a similar lapse of six years between the first rejection and 1243.

inquire 'de ipsius vita, conversatione, fama, meritis et miraculis et generaliter de omnibus circumstantiis per testes fide dignos', the greater part of the Acta is devoted to a description of Hildegard's miracles.[34] This is defensible in terms of convention, and because a copy of Godfrey and Theodoric's Vita was among the books sent for papal consideration.[35] While many of the miracles described were posthumous, some were said to have taken place in her lifetime. In this case, the latest of these must have been performed some fifty-four years before the writing of the first version of the Acta. Consequently there are many cases in which the informants admit ignorance about the names of those who were miraculously cured.[36]

If we leave aside for the moment the inferential evidence which is to be gained from the sorts of cures ascribed to Hildegard, it might be wondered whether the Acta adds any new information to Hildegard's biography.[37] On the whole, the answer appears to be negative. While the Acta sometimes corroborates incidents mentioned elsewhere - thus there is reference to the controversial burial of the excommunicate in

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34. Bruder, 119.

35. Miracles were the most easily handled evidence of sanctity. See Kemp, op. cit. and Foreville, op. cit. In Hildegard's case, those pressing for her canonisation appear to have been unable to comply with the later more stringent requirements, a fact that is partly explained by the longish gap beween Hildegard's death and the moves for her canonisation.

36. The terms in which the miracles are related suggest that there was no register of miracles such as was kept for St Thomas at Canterbury, the communal memory of the convent providing such details as survived.

37. The inferential evidence I have in mind is the sort that R. Finucane discusses in his book Miracles and Pilgrims (London, 1977).

the miracle of Hildegard's causing the grave to disappear by making the sign of the cross with her abbatial staff - little new information is to be found.[38]

The incident recounted by one of the investigators, where Hildegard is said to have astonished her nurse by describing a calf in utero, seems, from its context, to have been taken from Godfrey and Theodoric's Vita, yet it is not found in any extant version.[39] It is possible that the story reflects part of the original form of the Vita, before it was abridged by Abbot Godfrey of Echternach, and that this had survived in some physical form, or as part of the tradition, at Rupertsberg. Also in the Hauptstaatsarchiv at Coblenz are the following documents: a charter of Archbishop Arnold of Mainz confirming the possessions of Rupertsberg;[40] a second charter by Arnold reconciling Rupertsberg and Disibodenberg in their dispute over possessions and spiritual control;[41] a charter of Frederick Barbarossa, taking Rupertsberg into his protection and confirming its rights.[42] To these should be added the earlier charter of Archbishop

38. Bruder, 123. The evidence for Hildegard's assumed visit to Paris, accepted both by Stilting and Pitra, is based on a misunderstanding of the text. See below pp. 47f.

39. 'In libello... quem omnibus modis vera credit continere, scilicet...quae...vaccam vidit...': Bruder, 124-5.

40. Abt. 164, Nr. 1, May 22 1158; see Acht, 413-16.

41. Abt. 164, Nr. 2, May 22 1158; see Acht, 416-18.

42. Abt. 164, Nr. 3, April 18 1163; see Acht, 484-486.

Henry of Mainz reconsecrating the Rupertsberg Church and presenting the convent with a mill.[43]

These charters serve to verify and amplify matters touched on in the narrative sources, in a fairly direct way. Other documents have formed the basis of further research into Hildegard's background and questions of manuscript provenance. Particularly important are the fragments of the oldest Rupertsberg necrology and list of gifts to the foundation.[44] Apart from the bearing of their contents on the social, political and financial connections of the convent, a study of their differing hands has been used to establish the dates and provenance of the manuscripts of some of Hildegard's works. Finally, mention should be made of a list of donations to Rupertsberg covering the last quarter of the twelfth century.[45] It incorporates parts of the original fragmentary list of donations now at Wiesbaden, and has been extensively analysed by Schrader to establish further information about the family background of Hildegard.[46]

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43. München, Mainzer Urkunden Nr. 3187 (1152); see Acht, 326. The date of the charter is usually given as 1 May 1152, but Acht points out that it must be dated before 15 February 1152 since it refers to Conrad as still being alive. In this case the dedication of the church must have taken place on 1 May in an earlier year.

44. See Echtheit, 27-41, and reproductions (unpaginated). Hauptstaatsarchiv, Wiesbaden, Abt. 23, II, Nr. 7.

45. Coblenz Abt. 701 A VII3, Nr. 5. See Echtheit, 27-32.

46. M. Schrader, 'Die Heimat und die Abstammung der hl. Hildegard', StMGBO 54 (1936) 199-221 and 'Zur Heimat- und Familien-geschichte der heiligen Hildegard' StMGBO 57 (1939) 117-133.

Although Hildegard has been celebrated from the time of Godfrey and Theoderic for her extensive correspondence, there is no critical edition, and indeed some letters are still unpublished.[47] With a few notable exceptions, Hildegard's letters are less autobiographical in tone than some of her other works. This arises partly from the formal nature of medieval letters and partly from what Hildegard saw as the special nature of her gift. For this reason most of her letters are not written in propria persona but as the mouthpiece of God and contain a fairly generalised mixture of admonition and exhortation. Deductions can be made, for example, from the location of her correspondents about the itinerary of her preaching tours, while passing references sometimes supply an otherwise unknown fact - for example her meeting with Frederick Barbarossa at Ingelheim. More generally, the ways in which Hildegard's correpondents address her,

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47. Here follows a summary of the most important letter collections and their relationships. For full details see Echtheit, 59-208. Hildegard's correspondence is still, for many, represented by the collection in PL197. Most of the letters in PL go back to the 'Riesenkodex' (Ms R). This represents a theological letter collection, edited and arranged by Wezelin, Hildegard's nephew, soon after her death. The letters are arranged in pairs, a request to Hildegard being followed by her reply. Wezelin has taken considerable liberties with the letters, combining different originals and changing their addressees. Other letters in PL include some from the lost Himmerode Ms and the correspondence between Hildegard and Abbot Philipp of Parc, now London, BL Ms Add. 17292. The extent of Wezelin's editorial work can be judged by comparison with the Hildegard's letters in Ms W (Wein, Nationalbibliothek Cod 881) printed in Pitra, and Ms Z (Stuttgart, Landesbibliothek Cod. Theol.Phil 4o 253) printed in Haug. These, however between them contain only three letters to Hildegard herself, and cover the years 1153-1170. The two mss from Gembloux which contain the Vita also contain the important correspondence between Hildegard and Guibert of Gembloux. These have been printed in Pitra, with additions in AB 1, op. cit. A further manuscript, Ms B, contains 56 letters, twelve of which appear in other collections, but no letters addressed to Hildegard. Some of these have been published in Echtheit and by Dronke in WW and 'Problemata'. About half remain unpublished.

and the questions they ask of her provide much information about contemporary attitudes to Hildegard.[48] Before leaving the correspondence, special mention should be made of Hildegard's letters to Guibert of Gembloux which contain explanations of the nature of her vision and manner of working. This exchange of some eighteen letters took place in the last years of Hildegard's life.

Finally, among the sources for Hildegard's biography various autobiographical pieces should be mentioned.[49] The autobiographical fragments in the Vita, already alluded to in that context, require further investigation.[50] The question of whether Hildegard herself produced a self-contained autobiographical work has hardly been considered. Although unusual for the twelfth century, several of her male contemporaries did so.[51] However, the special problems of Hildegard's attitude to her own powers may have meant that she lacked the requisite self-regard for such an exercise.[52]

If, as Schrader and Führkötter believe, the passages were taken from

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48. See chapter III, below.

49. I am concerned here with explicit autobiographical statements. Obviously much information about Hildegard is implied by the type, content, and sources of her writings as a whole.

50. See above, p. 5.

51. e.g. Guibert of Nogent, Ottloh of St Emmeram, Abelard. See G. Misch, Studien zur Geschichte den Autobiographie 4 vols in 8, (Frankfurt, 1949-69). In terms of scale, Hildegard's work would have been more like that of Abelard than Guibert.

52. See J. Benton, 'Consciousness of Self and Perception of Individuality'. in R&R, 263ff.

a lost biography by Volmar, it might be wondered why Godfrey did not use them to write the first book of the Vita.[53] Their utilisation by Theodoric suggests the possibility that they came to him by way of Trier, and were a collection of visionary pieces (dictated in the usual way to Volmar) rather than part of an explicit biography. This may go some way towards explaining the apparent confusion between works attributed to Volmar and Godfrey.[54] Whatever the actual genesis of the passages, there can be little doubt that they do represent the words of Hildegard herself.[55] This seems clear both on thematic and stylistic grounds, and is particularly apparent when they are compared with the prefaces and epilogues to Hildegard's theological works.[56] These diverse but often interdependent sources will be used in the following section to establish an outline account of Hildegard's life.

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53. 'Diese autobiographischen Aufzeichnungen hat Hildegard anschienend Volmar diktiert oder ihm zur Verfügung gestellt': Echtheit, 14.

54. See above, p. 6.

55. Pace B. Schmeidler, 'Bermerkungen zum Corpus der Brief der hl. Hildegard von Bingen', Corona Quernia: Festgabe fur Karl Strecker (Leipzig, 1941) 365.

56. See below, chapter V.

ii. The Life of Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179)

Hildegard was born in 1098, a fact not immediately obvious from the Vita, which opens with the imprecise statement: 'In Romana republica regnante Heinrico nominis huius quarto augusto...fuit...virgo...'.[57] Later, in one of the autobiographical inclusions, Hildegard has written:

> Nam post incarnationem Christi anno millesimo centesimo doctrina apostolorum et ardens iusticia quam in christianis et spiritualibus constituerat tardere cepit et hesitationem uertebatur. Illis temporibus nata sum et parentes mei cum suspiriis deo me uouebant.[58]

This passage has been the source of some confusion, leading the redactor of the Gembloux manuscript of the Vita to alter the opening sentence so that it reads as if Hildegard was born in 1100.[59] The matter is further complicated by the fact that, although Hildegard's words suggest that she is not attempting to give a precise date for her birth ('Illis temporibus nata sum'), in later passages she appears to have taken this year as her birth year. Indeed, Hildegard may have confused herself as well as others.[60] It should be noted that although the writers of the Vita are vague about Hildegard's birthdate, the date of her death is carefully recorded, at least as far as the day and month is concerned. This is because it was

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57. Appendix, 2. Guibert of Gembloux in his Life writes: 'circa annum Dominicae incarnationis millesimum centesimum...': Pitra, 407.

58. Appendix, 12-13

59. 'Igitur in anno incarnationis domini millesimo centesimo qui erat annus quadragesimus quintus Henrici huius nominis quarti regis...cum populus christianus ab apostolica doctrina fere declinaret et in lege divina iam iamque hesitaret, fuit in Galliae citerioris...virgo...progenita': Ms G, f.192r.

60. See below, pp. 149f.

important to pinpoint the death day within the liturgical calendar, so that it might be properly commemorated, although for the same reason the year was not required.

The prefaces to Hildegard's works provide the information necesary for a more precise dating. The preface to the Scivias reads: 'Factum est in millesimo centesimo quadragesimo primo Filii Dei Iesu Christi incarnationis anno, cum quadraginta duorum annorum septemque mensium essem...'.[61] This narrows the field considerably but still yields two possibilities: Hildegard was born either in the last seven months of 1098 or the first five months of 1099.[62] The matter can be settled by considering the statements Hildegard makes in her other prefaces, the LVM: 'Igitur in sexagesimo primo aetatis meae anno, qui est millesimus centesimus quinquagesimus octavus Dominicae Incarnationis annus...'[63] and the preface to the LDO:'... cum sexaginta quinque annorum essem.... in millesimo centesimo sexagesimo tertio Dominicae Incarnationis anno...'.[64] This can be seen by considering the following limiting cases. Suppose Hildegard had just reached her 61st year at the beginning of 1158 - thus she was 60 + 0 months at the beginning of 1158 (i.e. 25 December or 25 March) and so must have been born at the beginning of the year 1098. But Hildegard could have been up to 60 years and 11 months old at the beginning of 1158 for this statement to hold true, in which case she would have been up to eleven

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61. Scivias , 3.

62. Pace Führkötter, Das Leben, 141. Whether the year is taken as beginning on 25 March, or Christmas Day, makes no difference at this stage of the calculation.

63. Pitra, 8.

64. PL197.741.

months old at the beginning of 1098 and thus born in 1097. On the other hand, supposing Hildegard was 60 years and 0 months at the end of 1158, then she would have been born at the end of 1098. Finally, if Hildegard was 60 years and 11 months at the end of 1158 (the limiting case, as she could not have been older) she must have been 11 months old at the end of 1098 and was thus born in the first month of 1098. In other words Hildegard's birth could have occurred at any time between the beginning of 1097 and the end of 1098, but not later. Since Hildegard asserts that she was 42 years and 7 months old at some time in 1141, the limiting cases this provides are that she was 7 months old at the beginning of 1099 (that is, she was born five months into 1098), or that she was 7 months old at the end of 1099, that is, she was born in the first 5 months of 1099. Putting these two sets of data together we find that Hildegard must have been born five months into 1098. Taking the beginning of the year as 25 December, this would mean from 25 May to the end of the year.[65] Stilting was hard put to calculate the date of Hildegard's death since he lacked most of the data used above. Since the Vita gives the day of her death as 17 September, and her age as eighty-one she must have died in 1079, conversely she must have been born between May and September.[66]

The names of Hildegard's parents are given in the Vita as Hildebert and Mechtilde (Matilda), described as 'mundanis impliciti curis et

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65. If the year is taken as beginning on 25 April the dates would become 25 September - 24 April.

66. This in fact seems to rule out the possibility of the April dating, because it would not have allowed her to reach the age of 81 by September.

67. Appendix, 2.

opulencia conspicui'.[67] Attempts to identify Hildegard's place of birth more closely go back to Guibert of Gembloux. However he had to be content with writing that Hildegard was born 'in territorio Maguntinae civitatis', apparently a deduction he made in default of receiving more specific information in answer to his request.[68]

The reasons for Trithemius' identification of Bockelheim as Hildegard's birthplace are not apparent.[69] Yet it has been accepted with few dissenting voices until this century.[70] Roth also located some of the documentary evidence which was subsequently used by Schrader to establish that Hildegard's father was 'der Edelfreie Hildebert von Bermersheim'.[71]

Guibert of Gembloux claimed in his Life that Hildegard was the youngest of ten children. Subsequent research has in part supported this claim, since the names of seven of Hildegard's siblings have been retrieved.[72] Drutwin, the eldest, was witness to a charter with his father in 1127.[73] Two other brothers entered the Church. Hugo was

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68. Pitra, 407.

69. Annalium Hirsaugiensium (St Gall, 1690) 421.

70. One such was F. Roth, 'Studien zur Lebensbeschreibung der hl. Hildegard', StMGBO 39 (1918) 75, yet the error was repeated by O. d'Alessandro in Mistica e filosofia in Ildegarda di Bingen (Padova, 1966).

71. 'Die heilige Hildegard ist zu Bermesheim bei Alzey geboren und gehort dem Geschlechte der Edelfreien von Vermerssheym an': M. Schrader 'Die Heimat und die Abstammung der hl. Hildegard', StMGBO 54 (1936) 221.

72. See Roth, op.cit. and Schrader, op.cit.

73. 'Hildebertus de Vermessheym et filius eius Drutwinus': Schrader, op. cit., 218.

74. See Guibert of Gembloux to Radulph of Villers: Pitra, 579

precentor of Mainz Cathedral and educated Radulf, later bishop of Liege.[74] Roricus was a canon of Tholey in the Saar.[75] Of the four sisters known by name, Irmengard, Odilia, Jutta and Clementia, the last mentioned was a nun in Hildegard's convent.[76]

Few of the expected hagiographical commonplaces are found in the Vita account of Hildegard's birth and early life.[77] The following description of the child Hildegard: 'praematura sinceritas ab omni carnalium habitudine multum dissentire videretur' suggests the puer/senex topos. [78] However the use of the topos does not mean that Hildegard's gifts were not recognised as unusual, both by herself and others at an early age. Indeed, such recognition may have led her parents to dedicate their child to God, rather than the fact (if it was a fact) that she was their tenth child.

Little information is provided by the sources about Hildegard's early life. The supposition that she lived at Castle Bickelheim (since proved false) enabled some writers to paint fanciful pictures of her contemplating 'the rooms in the grim Castle of Bickelheim, in which (she) knew the Emperor was imprisoned'.[79] Or conversely, 'Viellecht ruhten auf der Gestalt des tief gemuhtigen Kaisers die Blicke einer kleinen Magdleins...'.[80] Such passing references to the

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75. Named as a donor with other two brothers; see Schrader, op. cit.

76. Schrader, op. cit.

77. Cf. H. Delehaye, The Legends of the Saints (London, 1962.)

78. Appendix, 2. Cf. E.R. Curtius, European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages (New York, 1963) 98-105.

79. F.Steele, The Life and Visions of St Hildegarde (London, 1914) 13.

80. H. Fischer, Die hl. Hildegard v. Bingen... (Munchen, 1927) 11.

fact that she was breast-fed by her mother for a time, and that she was later in the care of a nurse which occur in the autobiographical passages, accord with what we know of the usual pattern for children of her condition.[81] But as might be expected, more attention is paid to Hildegard's spiritual growth than her physical development. So Godfrey, in the first book of the Vita:

> Mox namque ut potuerat primam temptare loquelam tam uerbis quam nutibus significabat his qui circa se erant secretarum uisionum species quas preter communem ceteris aspectum speculatione prorsus insolita intuebatur.[82]

This can be compared with the extract from Hildegard's letter to Guibert of Gembloux which he includes near the end of the book: 'Ab infancia autem mea ossibus et neruis ac uenis meis non dum confortatis uisione hanc in anima mea usque ad presens tempus semper uideo.'[83] In one of the autobiographical passages included by Theodoric in the second book of the Vita, Hildegard made a more explicit statement about her earliest visionary experience, where she wrote: 'ac tercio etatis mee anno tantum lumen uidi quod anima mea contremuit'[84] The claim that she had her first experience of what she was later to call 'the living light' at the age of two, can be reconciled with her statement in the preface to the Scivias: 'Virtutem autem et...uisionum a puellari aetate, scilicet a tempore illo cum quinquennis essem...in

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81. Cf. M. McLaughlin, 'Survivors and Surrogates: Children and Parents from the Ninth to the Thirteenth Centuries', in L. DeMause, The History of Childhood (New York, 1974) 101-81.

82. Appendix, 2.

83. Appendix, 8. For the text of the letter, a combination from G and R, see Dronke, WW, 250-256.

84. Appendix, 13.

me senserem' on the assumption that she did not at first connect the experience of the light with her visionary powers.[85]

The next datable event in Hildegard's life was one of great significance. When she was about eight she was entrusted to the care of Jutta, the daughter of Count Stephan of Spanheim, an anchoress attached to the monastery of Disibodenberg.[86] According to the chronology of Hildegard's life the year would have been 1106, yet there are some difficulties in fitting this in with the account of the Annales St Disibodi. As we saw earlier, Jutta's death is recorded in this source under the year 1136, where it is claimed that she had been enclosed there for twenty-four years. But this would mean that the enclosure took place in 1112, by which time Hildegard would have been about fourteen. Moreover, it is doubtful that there was an active monastery at Disibodenberg in 1106, because of troubles between the Emperor and Archbishop Ruthard.[87] The ASD mark the year 1108 as the beginning of its reflowering, when Ruthard established monks from St Jakob at Mainz and laid the foundation stone for a new monastery church, the progress of which can be followed in the annals, until its completion in 1146. Of course it is possible that Jutta chose to be enclosed at Disibodenberg in the temporary absence of the monks (although this makes the circumstantial details of Guibert's accounts

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85. Scivias, 4.

86. Godfrey writes 'iam fere esset octo annorum...', while Hildegard writes in her autobiographical account 'in octavo autem anno meo...': Appendix, 2 and 13.

87. W. Seibrich, 'Geschichte des Klosters Disibodenberg' in Festschrift, 59. Seibrich, in asserting that Jutta and Hildegard were both enclosed there in 1112, fails to mention that this contradicts the generally received outline of Hildegard's life: ibid., 62.

more suspect), in which case the number of years given for Jutta's enclosure must be discounted. On the other hand, it is possible that Hildegard was entrusted to Jutta's care some years before they were both formally enclosed at Disibodenberg. While Hildegard's words are sufficiently vague to permit this interpretation: 'In octavo autem anno meo in spiritualem conversationem deo oblata sum...', Godfrey includes Hildegard's age, the place (Disibodenberg) and the name of Hildegard's mistress (Jutta): 'iam fere esset octo annorum consepelienda Christo...recluditur in monte sancti Dysibodi cum...iuttha...'. Moreover, in other contexts Hildegard always refers to Disibodenberg as the place where she was first offered to God. It seems then, that we must reject the ASD claim that Jutta had been enclosed there for twenty-four years.[88] A simple solution to all these problems is to propose that the number twenty-four (xxiiii) in the Annals was originally twenty-nine (xxviiii), in which case the date of Jutta's inclusion would have been 1107, when Hildegard could be described as fere octo annorum. Enclosed at the same time as Jutta and Hildegard was a young relative of Jutta's, who bore the same name and who was to act as their servant.[89]

The kind of life that Hildegard led after coming to Disibodenberg must be inferred largely from such works as Aelred's Regula

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88. That Guibert of Gembloux also suggests Jutta was enclosed for twenty-four years cannot be taken as independent confirmation, since his knowledge is apparently based on the ASD. He avoids the difficulty by not mentioning the year in which Jutta died.

89. That she was called Jutta, rather than Hildegard is evident in the ASD, and made even clearer by Guibert (Pitra, 409-10), although Seibrich seems to think that they were both called Hildegard: op. cit. 62.

Inclusarum and the Ancrene Riwle or, with some reservations, The Life of Christina of Markyate.[90] The Acta claims that Hildegard was subjected to the Benedictine Rule from the beginning of her religious life: 'quam octavo aetatis suae anno cuidam inclusae... sub beati Benedicti regula eam servire Domino in monte sancti Disboti obtulerunt.[91] Such a statement may have been made on the evidence of Hildegard's later career, for in the first autobiographical extract Hildegard mentions personal rather than institutional ties when she refers to Jutta as 'quedam nobilis femina cui in disciplinam eram subdita...', [92] and Godfrey says merely '...illam sub humilitatis et innocencie ueste diligenter instituebat'.[93] On the other hand his mention of the psalms immediately after this, together with Guibert of Gembloux's claim that the cell was placed so that its inmates could hear the monks chanting the opus dei makes it likely that some aspects of the Rule were adopted from the start.

Hildegard gives little indication of how the recluses' cell grew in to a convent for Benedictine nuns or how quickly this development occurred. Godfrey and Guibert, in their respective biographies, while

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90. Aelred, PL32.451ff.; E.J. Dobson, ed. The English Text of the Ancrene Riwle EETS, 267 (1972); C. H. Talbot, The Life of Christina of Markyate (Oxford, 1959).

91. Bruder, 125.

92. Appendix, 13.

93. Appendix, 2.

noting the change and ascribing it to the spiritual reputation first of Jutta, and then of her pupil, are equally reticent.[94]

Jutta apparently had no pretensions to learning, although Hildegard, for reasons which will be explained later, may have been overstating her case when she claimed 'indocta mulier me docuerat'.[95] At any rate, Jutta was able to instruct Hildegard in the reading and singing of the psalms as Godfrey noted:

> ...carminibus tantum dauiticis instruens, in psalterio dechacordo iubilare premonstrabat. Ceterum preter psalmorum simplicem noticiam nullam litteratorie uel musice artis ab homine percepit doctrinam...[96]

Since the Psalter was the universal primer in the middle ages, this statement does not mean that Hildegard learnt the psalms by rote. Rather, in learning them, she also learnt to read. That she also learnt to write (at that time not a necessary concomitant to learning to read) is shown by subsequent events.

When Jutta died in 1136 Hildegard was apparently elected to head the

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94. The evidence from the thirteenth-century lessons for the Feast of St Hildegard at Gembloux, which claim that she was consecrated at the hands of the Bishop of Bamberg, suggests that the development may have been underway by this date. See above, p. 8. Although Hildegard does not mention her consecration, referring usually to her first dedication at the age of eight, her singling out of the age of fifteen, as the time when she ceased to talk naively about her visions, may be an oblique reference to when she took the veil. Godfrey refers to her profession, but does not date it: '...uirgo Christi uoto monastice professionis et sacri uelaminis benedictionis prouecta crescebat'; Appendix, 3.

95. See below, chapter IV; Appendix, 14.

96. Appendix, 2.

97. This is only stated explicitly by Guibert of Gembloux, but if the appointment was not made at this stage, she was certainly in control by the time of the Scivias vision, as no female superior was consulted when she sought permission to write.

small convent.[97] No doubt such an election was in recognition both of her spiritual advancement and organisational abilities, although Guibert's account is couched in highly conventional terms:

> Proinde unanimi sororum consensu, cum de ejus discretione et temperantia securae essent, ad disciplinae censuram super eas exercendam elegitur, et licet totis obniteretur viribus, abbatis praecepto et sodalium suorum instantia, officium prioratus subire compellitur.[98]

Although Hildegard's election as prioress indicates some recognition of her gifts and abilities, the real turning point of her life was reached in 1141. Her description of what happened, in the preface to the Scivias, has been used by Godfrey, Guibert and the writers of the Acta:

> ...maxime coruscationis igneum lumen aperto caelo ueniens totum cerebrum meum transfudit et totum cor totumque pectus meum uelut flamma non tamen ardens sed calens ita inflammauit.... Et repente intellectum expositionis librorum, uidelicet psalterii, euangelii et aliorum catholicorum tam ueteris quam noui Testamenti uoluminum sapiebam....[99]

So Hildegard described the sudden experience of penetrating to the core of the books of her religion, but of even greater significance for her subsequent career was the command that she received at the same time, to write down and promulgate what she understood by means of her vision: 'O homo fragilis, et cinis cineris, et putredo putredinis, dic et scribe quae uides et audis.' Although there was no mistaking the message, which was repeated thrice more in the same vision, Hildegard hesitated to carry out the command, fearing that she was unequal to the task. Hildegard's explanation of her predicament,

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98. Pitra, 411.

99. Scivias, 3-4.

described in the preface to the Scivias, is as follows:

> Sed ego, quamuis haec uiderem et audirem, tamen propter dubietatem et malam opinionem et propter diuersitatem uerborum hominum, tamdiu non in pertinacia, sed in humilitatis officio scribere recusaui, quousque in lectum aegritudinis flagello Dei depressa caderem....

Hildegard interpreted the illness as a sign of God's displeasure, and finally told her spiritual adviser, Volmar, a monk of Disibodenberg, about her dilemma. With Volmar's help, and the agreement of Abbot Cuno of Disibodenberg, Hildegard was encouraged to begin writing down her visions. Immediately her illness lifted, and, as she subsequently wrote: 'uiribus receptis de aegritudine me erigens, uix opus istud decem annis consummans ad finem perduxi'.[100] It should not be thought that Hildegard devoted these ten years exclusively to the writing of the Scivias. As a nun and an abbess the amount of time which she could spend writing was necessarily limited, even if Hildegard had not decided to relocate her convent in this period.

Hildegard's earliest extant letter, to Bernard of Clairvaux, was written in 1146 or 1147. In it she described her visionary gifts and sought confirmation of her mission to make known what she saw and heard. Bernard replied in understandably guarded terms, considering that Hildegard was at the time something of an unknown quantity:

> Congratulamur gratie Dei, qui in te est. Et ut eam tamquam gratiam habeas et toto ei humilitatis et devotionis affectu studeas respondere admonemus.... Ceterum ubi interior eruditio est et unctio docens de omnibus, quid nos aut docere possumus aut monere?[101]

Possibly because of Hildegard's proven connection with this greatest

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100. Scivias, 6.

101. Echtheit, 107.

spiritual figure of the twelfth century, Trithemius in his Annalium Hirsaugiensium for the year 1147 described a visit by St Bernard to Hildegard at Bingen, when he was preaching the second Crusade in the Rhineland. The story must be dismissed as apocryphal for several reasons, most of which were advanced by Stilting.[102] Stilting concedes that Bernard's words, as reported by Trithemius, conform very well to his known opinion of her, and suggests further that his speech may have been delivered on a later occasion (although how Trithemius alone was enabled to preserve this tradition when no one else did is unclear). The occasion, he suggests, was the Synod of Trier, held in that city between 30 November 1147 and February 1148, described in the first book of the Vita as follows:

> Per idem tempus...Eugenius celebrato Remis universali concilio...Treueri morabatur. Visum est pontifici Moguntine ciuitatis et maioribus cleri ad apostolici cognitionem de his esse ueniendum quatinus ex ipsius auctoritate nosceretur quid de compertis recipiendum aut refutandum foret.[103]

It is not quite clear from the Vita when Abbot Cuno communicated with the prelates of Mainz concerning Hildegard's visions. Godfrey's narrative suggests that Hildegard's Scivias-vision, her disclosure to Volmar, Volmar's to Cuno and Cuno's to Archbishop Henry of Mainz all followed closely upon each other, culminating 'per idem tempus', in

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102. 'Commentarius', 635. They include the fact that Hildegard was still at Disibodenberg in 1147 and that Bernard's Rhineland journey was in 1146.

103. Appendix, 4. It should be noted here that although Godfrey has written 'celebrato Remis universali concilio', the Council of Rheims in fact took place immediately after the Synod of Trier, in March 1148.

the Synod of Trier. Yet six years separated the first and last events in the series.[104] The Cistercian Pope, Eugenius III, a protégé of St Bernard, having obtained a copy of the first part of the Scivias, 'manibus propriis tenens ipseque... archiepiscopo et cardinalibus omnibus... publice legit'.[105] Whether St Bernard's recommendation was the deciding factor or not (Hildegard herself does not mention it), the Pope sent Hildegard a letter 'in quibus concessa sub Christi et beati Petri nomine licentia proferendi, quecunque per Spiritum sanctum cognovisset, eam ad scribendum animavit'.[106] This letter is not extant, although the charter he gave the monastery of Disibodenberg, as 'locum, quo illa fouebatur' exists.[107]

Meanwhile Hildegard's growing fame had caused an increase in vocations and a severe shortage of accommodation in the nuns' cloister. Disibodenberg had been in an almost continual state of rebuilding during Hildegard's time there and a plan for relocating and expanding the cloister was already being discussed when Hildegard announced that she had been divinely commanded to remove her convent to Rupertsberg, a hill overlooking the junction of the Nahe and the Rhine, some 30km from Disibodenberg. To say that the proposal did not

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104. Guibert of Gembloux's Life is no guide to the chronology since it is broken off at the point where 'Stupet abbas novitatis tantae relatu...': (Pitra, 414), while the autobiographical fragment has something of the same telescopic effect; see Appendix, 14.

105. Appendix, 4. Godfrey adds the information that Eugenius had first dispatched Albero, bishop of Verdun, and his deputy Adalbert to Disibodenberg to examine Hildegard and her writings, as well as mentioning St Bernard's part in persuading the Pope to give his authority to Hildegard's writings.

106. Appendix, 4.

107. Issued at Metz 18 February 1148.

meet with the immediate approval of the abbot and monks of Disibodenberg would be an understatement. Nor are the reasons far to seek. Leaving aside any question of the monks' opposition to female independence, they would scarcely have welcomed the departure of their chief spiritual, and hence material asset.[108] There was also the question of the nuns' dowries or property that they brought with them on entry.[109] The exercise of spiritual and temporal authority over the women's house would also become more difficult if it were physically severed from the parent institution. Godfrey does not canvass the reasons, writing merely, 'sed illis hesitantibus eo quod discessum eius moleste ferrent...'.[110] But Hildegard's autobiographical note in the Vita provides more detail, including the doubt that the monks expressed over the genuineness of the revelation:

> Abbas autem meus et fratres et populus eiusdem provincie cum percepissent de hac mutatione quid hoc esset quod de pinguedine agrorum et uinearum et de amenitate loci illius ad inaquosa ubi nulla essent commoda ire uellemus mirum habuerunt[111].Me quoque quadam uanitate deceptam esse dicebant.

In the face of such opposition, Hildegard took to her bed, while the debate raged around her. According to Godfrey, Hildegard finally prevailed when Abbot Cuno, entering her bedchamber in a sceptical frame of mind, found himself unable 'uel de capite illam sustollere,

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108. It is hard to quantify the material/spiritual nexus, but Godfrey mentions the gifts of the faithful as part of the revenue which purchased Disibodenberg: Appendix, 7.

109. There was probably no formal dowry at this stage, but a substantial gift was the norm. See J. Lynch, 'Monastic Recruitment', ABR 26 (1975) 425-47.

110. Appendix, 5.

111. Appendix, 16.

uel de latere in latus reclinere' and realised that Hildegard was indeed suffering the visitation 'diuae correptionis'.[112] But Hildegard had also availed herself of secular aid in the person of Richardis of Stade, the mother of one of nuns, who intervened with Archbishop Henry of Mainz.[113]

The date of Hildegard's removal to Rupertsberg with about twenty nuns is not found in any of our sources, but it seems reasonable to put it, with Führkötter, in the year 1150.[114] Such a date would allow time for the construction of some more or less permanent accommodation for the nuns and the rebuilding of the chapel, reconsecrated by Archbishop Henry in 1150 or 1151.[115] The financial transactions involved in founding the new monastery are mentioned in Book One of the Vita. Since the site belonged 'partim ad Moguntine ecclesie canonicos...et fundus cum oratorio Sancti Roberti possessio erat comitis Bernhardi de Hildensheim...',[116] Hildegard purchased it 'de donariis fidelium que fama nominis eius adducti deferebant...partim dato precio partim facto concambio'. To complete the process she appointed the archbishops of Mainz as advocates of the convent.[117]

The transition from Disibodenberg to Rupertsberg was not without difficulties. The contrast between the well-established monastery she

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112. Appendix, 6.

113. The widowed marchioness was also a second cousin of Jutta of Spanheim.

114. Das Leben, 15.

115. See above, p. 12.

116. Appendix, 6.

117. This is confirmed in Arnold's charter; see above, p.11.

had left and the new foundation was remarked not only by the monks she had left behind, but by her nuns and the people who had flocked to the Rupertsberg in search of spiritual and material succour. Hildegard's perseverence was rewarded, as she wrote: 'Nam multi qui nos prius contempnentes inaquosam inutilitatem nominaverant uenerunt ad nos undique adiuuantes et benedictionibus nos replentes.'[118]

Shortly after the move to Rupertsberg Hildegard managed to complete the Scivias in 1151, only to be faced with the defection of one of her chief supporters, the nun Richardis of Stade. Richardis was the daughter of the marchioness who had helped Hildegard obtain permission to move. Hildegard wrote in the autobiographical inclusion in the Vita that after helping her in the writing of the Scivias, and supporting her in other ways, Richardis accepted the position of abbess in a far off convent, against Hildegard's expressed wishes, where shortly afterwards she died. This rather laconic account is supplemented by a series of letters between Hildegard, Richardis and her mother, Archbishop Hertwig of Bremen (the nun Richardis' brother), Archbishop Henry of Mainz and Pope Eugenius.[119]

To the period after the completion of the Scivias belong Hildegard's medical/natural history books, known collectively as the Liber Subtilitorum. They comprise the Liber simplicis medicinae or Physica and the Liber compositae medicinae also known as Causae et Curae. The overall presentation of the books is in marked contrast to Hildegard's

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118. Appendix, 17.

119. See chapter VI, below.

120. 'Views', 12-15.

visionary works, a fact which led Singer to doubt their authenticity.[120] On the other hand the evidence of the preface to the LVM, together with a certain congruence in content with Hildegard's other books, has convinced most scholars that they are Hildegard's works.[121] Hildegard's musical composition, the Symphonia should also be assigned to this period,[122] together with the unknown script and language.[123]

Shortly after Frederick Barbarossa was elected King in 1152 Hildegard wrote him a letter of allegiance and congratulation.[124] Apparently Hildegard had met the king in person at the restored imperial palace of Ingelheim, near Bingen.[125] She maintained good relations with him, in spite of the schism which began in 1159.[126] Indeed, Rupertsberg was issued a charter of imperial protection as

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121. Pitra, 7-8; see also Liebeschütz, Das allegorische Weltbild... (Leipzig/Berlin, 1930) 8, 85, 90; Echtheit, 4ff., and most recently Dronke, WW, 162. Many of the anomalous features of the works can be explained by assuming that the few surviving manuscripts are incomplete.

122. See Barth, Richter, Schmit-Görg, Hildegard von Bingen:Lieder (Salzburg, 1969). However it should be noted that Hildegard's musical compositions were already known to Odo of Paris in 1148: see PL197.351/2.

123. It is hard to know where to place these rather bizarre manifestations of Hildegard's imagination. It is possible that the words (hardly a language) could have been used as a kind of secret code at the convent, and it is noteworthy that some of the names of the addressees of Hildegard's letters are written in the secret writing (e.g. Ms Z f.44r) See further Pitra, 496-502 where he reproduces a list of 180 botanical names.

124. See Echtheit, 124-31.

125. See below, pp. 101-2.

126. For the effects of the schism on the German church see T. A. Reuter, 'The Papal schism, the Empire and the West, 1159-1169', D.Phil. thesis, Oxford University, 1975.

late as 1163. [127] It was not until 1164, with the election of the second anti-pope that Hildegard's communications with Frederick took on a much less compromising tone.

In the decade which followed Hildegard's move to Rupertsberg disputes arose with the monks of Disibodenberg over the nuns' property and autonomy. Whether Hildegard claimed the allods brought by the nuns on entry to Rupertsberg, or retrospectively those of nuns who entered the convent in its former location is unclear from the narrative sources. Godfrey described how Hildegard, compelled by a divine illness to confront the monks, went to Disibodenberg and :

> locum sue habitationis cum allodis ad se pertinentibus ab illius cenobii fratribus absoluit; relicta illis plurima portione possessionum que illo cum sororibus susceptis tradite fuerant et insuper pecuniarum non modica quantitate ne quid usquam iuste querele relinqueretur. [128]

The incident can be dated more closely by means of further information from the autobiographical fragments. In the second book of the Vita Hildegard, having described how she was led to confront the abbot on the matter adds that he was unable to do anything as he died 'post paucos dies'. [129] Abbot Cuno died July 2, 1155. [130] Hildegard's assertion that his successor was more amenable and that 'maiores ecclesie cum hec pervenissent in fide et caritate ea susceperunt atque ita fieri cum sigillo scripture firmauerunt' once more represents a telescoping of the narrative if the charter referred to is that of

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127. See above, p. 11.

128. Appendix, 8.

129. Appendix, 19.

130. ASD, 28.

131. See above, p. 11.

Arnold of Mainz, issued on May 22, 1158.[131] Another possibility is that there was some intermediate arrangement made which was confirmed by the later charter.[132] A further complication is introduced by what Hildegard wrote in a letter to her nuns describing the history of their foundation.[133] Here she gives the words of the speech she made to the abbot and monks, and describes the result:

> Et cum ego paupercula forma his verbis praedictam libertatem loci et allodiorum filiarum mearum a praefato abbate et a fratribus ejus peterem, eam cum permissione codicis omnes mihi constituerunt.[134]

It is probable, however, that she has run together events from her two visits to Disibodenberg.

During the years 1158-1163 Hildegard wrote her second major visionary work Liber Vitae Meritorum.[135] It seems likely that the difficulties she had experienced in the move to Rupertsberg had caused her to reflect upon human vice and virtue. The two are connected in what she wrote about this period in the autobiographical fragments:

> Sed quedam ex eis (the nuns) toruis luminibus me aspicientes uerbis occulte me laniabant dicentes quod importabilem strepitum regularis discipline quo eas constringere uellem suffere non possent. Sed Deus in aliis bonis sapientibusque sororibus que in omnibus passionibus meis michi asisterant....tamen librum uite meritorum...ad finem perduxi.[136]

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132. Arnold's second charter mentions that Cuno had given the nuns of Rupertsberg eight mansi in exchange for the offerings given with the nuns who entered Disibodenberg, and that in future the monks would have no claim on the nuns' offerings: Acht, 417.

133. PL197.1065.f.

134. PL197.1066.

135. 'Cum sexaginta annorum essem, fortem et mirabilem visionem vidi, in qua etiam per quinquennium laboravi': Pitra, 8.

136. Appendix, 24.

Also at this time Hildegard suffered what is generally referred to as her three-year illness.[137] This can be tentatively placed between the years 1158 and 1161, on the assumption that the autobiographical fragments in the Vita are in chronological order. The nature of this illness will be discussed later, [138] but it is sufficient at this point to note that it contained an acute phase - the thirty-day illness - and periods of remission in which Hildegard was able to undertake her first preaching tour, described by her as follows:'Ad alia quoque loca congregationum iter arripui ac uerba que deus iussit ibi explanaui'.[139] A second journey, to Trier, where she preached publicly, Metz and Krauftal, followed in 1160.[140] A third tour, including Cologne, Boppard, Andernach, Siegburg, Werden and Luttich was made before 1163.

In 1163 Hildegard commenced her third visionary work, the Liber Divinorum Operum. Within the next two years she founded another monastery, at Eibingen, across the Rhine from Rupertsberg, as mentioned in the Acta: 'Praeterea trans flumen Rheni ad dimidiam leucam aliud monasterium fundavit, ubi xxx praebendas instituit'.[141] It was no doubt Hildegard's destination when Theodoric wrote : 'Interea cum iuxta uillam Rudensheim reni fluentia nauigio sulcaret et ad contiguum monasterium sanctimonialium properaret...' in his

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137. Führkötter, Das Leben, 132.

138. See chapter VII below.

139. Appendix, 22.

140. Appendix, 35-6. The itinerary can in some cases be inferred from her correspondence.

141. Bruder, 125.

account of one of her miracles in Book Three of the Vita.[142]

Between 1167 and 1170 Hildegard was prostrated by a second prolonged illness, to which she refers in the preface to the Vita S. Disibodi:

> ...anno Dominicae Incarnationis millesimo centesimo septuagesimo,[143] fere per triennium in lecto aegritudinis jacens....

Before it left her she experienced once again a more severe illness, this time of forty days duration, in which she was again commanded to deliver her message at other monasteries.[144]

A disproportionate amount of the third book of the Vita is devoted to the healing of a woman from Cologne who had been possessed by an evil spirit for eight years.[145] The event can be placed in 1169, from the chronology of Hildegard's illnesses. Apart from the long account in chapters 20-22 of the Vita, which incorporates the correspondence between Hildegard and the monks of Brauweiler (including, in Ms B, a fuller text of the exorcism than in the remaining manuscripts), the matter is mentioned by two other correspondents of Hildegard's.[146]

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142. Appendix, 36.

143. PL197.1095/6

144. Appendix, 44; the monasteries included Maulbronn, Hirsau, Kircheim, Teck and Zwiefalten.

145. See further below, pp. 181ff.

146. Arnold, Hildegard's nephew and bishop-elect of Trier, PL197.181, and a deacon of Cologne, who provides the name of the woman, PL 197.258B-D. The deacon, whose initial is given in Ms R as 'T', was identified as Philipp of Heinsberg by Führkötter in Briefwechsel, 55. However, Philipp was already Archbishop by this date (1169). Führkötter seems to have realised the mistake, as the correspondent is described simply as 'Der Domdekan der Apostelkirche' in Das Leben, 156.

Before Hildegard was able to complete the LDO, Volmar, the Disibodenberg monk who had acted as her secretary for over thirty years, died. Hildegard's reaction to this event is described in a letter to Guibert of Gembloux, some time later.[147] Hildegard was able to obtain temporary help in the persons of Ludwig of St Eucharius at who commissioned the Vita, and her nephew Wezelin, the provost of St Andreas at Cologne.[148] It will be recalled that in the terms of Arnold's charter of 1158, Disibodenberg was bound to provide Rupertsberg with a provost. After Volmar's death, Hildegard appealed to Abbot Helenger, but a successor was not forthcoming. Hildegard took the matter up with Pope Alexander III, who replied via Wezelin.[149] Finally, in 1174 or 1175 Helenger sent Godfrey to Rupertsberg as provost, where he wrote the first book of the Vita before his death in early 1176. Meanwhile, in the autumn of 1175, Guibert of Gembloux had started his correspondence with Hildegard and received in answer to his questions, the letter 'De modo visionibus suae'.[150] He also took the opportunity to visit Hildegard for a few days, as described in his letter to Radulph of Villers.[151]

When Godfrey died, Hildegard's brother Hugo acted as secretary, while a canon from St Stephen of Mainz took his place as spiritual father of the nuns. Guibert went to Rupertsberg, at Hildegard's

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147. See Pitra, 381. Hildegard's correspondence with Guibert dates from 1175.

148. This information comes from the epilogue to the LDO in the Riesenkodex, printed in Herwegen, 'Collaborateurs', 308.

149. See below, pp. 76f.

150. See below pp. 219ff.

151. Pitra, 577.

invitation, in 1177.[152] By a lucky chance both the Mainz clergy were carried off by a fever shortly after Guibert arrived, and the nuns begged Guibert to take over. He filled both positions until 1180 when he was recalled to Gembloux.[153]

A year later Hildegard fell foul of the Mainz prelates over the burial of a supposed excommunicate at Rupertsberg.[154] The dispute continued until March 1179 when Archbishop Christian of Buch ordered the interdict to be lifted, and Hildegard's last six months were free from dissension. She died peacefully on 17 September, 1179, having forecast her coming end to the assembled nuns.[155] The information in the Vita, complete with meteorological prodigies, was retailed to Theodoric by the sisters.[156]

In order to understand the ways in which subsequent writers have viewed Hildegard's life, something must be said about her career post mortem. Clearly, one vouchsafed such charismatic gifts in life was an obvious candidate for official recognition as a saint. The Acta indicates that the nuns of Rupertsberg were first to make moves in this direction, as Pope Gregory's commission indicates: 'Sane supplicareunt nobis dilectae in Christo filiae abbatissa et sorores

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152. Although Guibert asserts this in several places, e.g. Pitra, 405, 578, no such letter from Hildegard appears to have survived.

153. Most of this information comes from his long letter to Radolph: Pitra, 575ff.

154. See below, chapter VI.

155. See Bruder, 120. Unfortunately Guibert of Gembloux has left no account of her death.

156. 'sicut prefate sorores eum descripserunt': Appendix, 46.

157. Bruder, 118.

monasterii sancti Ruperti de Pinguia Maguntinensis diocesis...'.[157] This letter is dated 1227, the year of his accession. It is, perhaps surprising that something had not been done earlier. Possibly it was, but no record has survived. One reason for approaching Gregory was that he had himself been papal legate in Germany, and had some knowledge of Hildegard's reputation.[158] As noted earlier, whatever the theory, in practice the case for canonisation depended largely on the authentication of the candidate's miracles, especially those performed after death. Theodoric, in his last chapter of the Vita, laid the foundations for such a development by recording that:

> Nec defuerunt ante quam sepeliretur miracula meritum sanctitatis eius adtestancia. Nam duo homines qui sanctum corpus eius spe bona tangere presumpserunt a gravi infirmitate conualuerunt.[159]

Thus in the Acta, as well as the corroboration of miracles performed during Hildegard's lifetime and described in the Vita, there is a large number of new miracles, said to have been effected at her tomb, or by means of her relics.[160] A fascinating insight into the compilation of the document is given by the following circumstances. In the first version, before the final summing up of the evidence is made this passage occurs:

> Quaerentibus etiam nobis a conventu, quare beata Hildegardis modo non faceret signa, dixerunt quod, cum post ejus mortem Dominus tot miracula ostenderet, et concursus populorum tantus fieret ad sepulcrum ejus, religio et divinum officium per tumultum populi

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158. 'qui de laudabili et sancta conversatione ipsius audierimus, dum in minori constituti officio... in partibus Alemmaniae fungeremur...': Bruder, 119.

159. Appendix, 47.

160. Miracles at tomb, Bruder, 120; by hair, 121-2; water in which bones were washed, 128.

> turbabantur in tantum, quod domino archiepiscopo illid retulerunt. Unde ipse accedens personaliter ad locum, praecepit ei ut a signis cessaret.[161]

However, when the first version was found wanting the passage was crossed out, and further miracles, at least one of which 'in praesenti accidit anno' were added in the space left at the end of the document.[162] The new version, if indeed it was sent to the Pope, produced no result, nor was any further progress made in the thirteenth century. During the next century Hildegard's name and feast day began to appear in martyrologies.[163] Further evidence for her formal canonisation, or at least express permission for 'ejus cultum solemnem et publicum' from John XXII is found in a letter of indulgence, dated from Avignon in 1324. The document, authorised by twelve bishops, gives forty days indulgence to the faithful who observe certain feast days, including that of St Hildegard, at the church at Rupertsberg.[164] Her inclusion by Baronius in the Roman Martyrology in the sixteenth century ensured her status as a saint, *de facto*, if not *de jure*.[165]

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161. Bruder, 127.

162. Bruder, 128.

163. 'Commentarius', 678-9.

164. Bruder, 129.

165. For modern observances of the cult, see *Festschrift*, esp. chapters 16, 17, 19, 23.

## CHAPTER TWO: APPROACHES TO THE LIFE

> Cette vie pourrait amener, il est vrai, un sourire sur les lèvres de l'incrédule; mais le chrétien, sentant son coeur s'échauffer au récit de ces merveilles, bénirait Dieu qui resist aux superbes et donne sa grace aux humbles.
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> A. Battandier, Revue des questions historiques 33 (1883) 425.

Much has been written about Hildegard over the past eight hundred years, although Battandier's dichotomy between radical scepticism and a devout but uncritical Christian approach is not clearly exemplified.[1] On the one hand there has been a signal lack of the former, while the Christian approach ranges from the credulous to

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1. See W. Lauter, Hildegard-Bibliographie I (Alzey, 1970) and II (1984). Analysis of the 855 entries in the first volume reveals that the majority adopt a Christian approach. Indeed some of the most important works already cited have come from the pens of those holding office in the Catholic church - e.g. the Bollandists, Cardinal Pitra, the priests Schmelzeis and May, the monks Herwegen and Baillet and what might be called the School of Eibingen (the nuns of the Abbey of St Hildegard), including Sisters Böckeler, Barth, Schrader and Führkötter. Nor is there a marked shift of approach in the 792 entries of the second volume. The great number of works occasioned by the 800th aniversary of Hildegard's death in 1979 may have had some skewing effect, but this has not been entirely countered by emergence of Hildegard as a subject for doctoral dissertations, the especially in American universities. In several cases the dissertations are also written from an overtly Christian stance.

2. Singer, the English historian of science perhaps comes nearest to Battandier's 'incrédule'. Yet he was not inclined to treat Hildegard lightly. He considered her to have 'a fiery, a prophetic, in many ways a singularly noble spirit': 'Views', 6.

critical.[2] Nor is there any simple chronological relationship between the Christian extremes, some of the earlier works showing more critical judgment than many of the later ones. Rather, there appear to be two streams within the Christian tradition of writing about Hildegard, a more popular and tendentious one, intended principally to confirm the belief of the faithful, and a second, which could be called one of Christian historical scholarship.

i. Historiography.

Although an investigation of the tendentious uses of Hildegardiana would be a fascinating exercise in historiography, I shall give only a few examples. Hildegard was used by both catholics and protestants in the reformation era for exemplary and polemical purposes. As early as 1528 Hieronymous Gebwiler, a Catholic humanist, employed Hildegard's prophecies in his De praesenti clericorum tribulatione, futurorumque temporum eventu....[3] Several decades later Mattias Vlachich, a Lutheran theologian, issued his 'Prophetia S. Hidegardis(sic) ...De ruina Papae & pia Ecclesiae reformatione...'.[4] At about the same time as Vlachich wrote, a priest, Justus Blankwaldt, offered his edition of Godfrey and Theodoric's Vita and letters from the Riesenkodex, to the Archbishop of Mainz, 'ad firmendam Catholicam nostram et orthodoxam fidem et religionem Christianam, et mores in Ecclesia

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3. (Hagenoe, 1529) sig. A.2. The epistle dedicatory is dated 1528.

4. M.Flavius Illyricus. (i.e. Mattias Vlachich) Duae veteres prophetiae de pia Ecclesiae Dei instauratione, ad nostra tempora pertinentes, I, dated 1520 in the BL Catalogue. Since Vlachich was born in 1520 some date between 1540 and 1575 seems more likely, and indeed is supported by inferences which can be made from the colophon.

5. Sanctae Hildegardis...Epistolarum liber (Coloniae, 1566) verso of title page.

instruendos...'.[5]

In the next century, the protestant use of Hildegard's prophecies appears to have been concentrated on an attack on the jesuits. The Elixir Jesuiticum of 1645, includes among various more or less scurrilous pieces, 'Vaticinium Hildegardis Jesuitis accomodatum...'[6] The anonymous English editor of The Nunns Prophesie was so impressed by what he took to be Hildegard's iconoclasm, in spite of the fact that she 'had the unhappiness to be Born in the very heat of Superstition, and to be bred up among all the Errors and Traditions of the Church of Rome' that he was able to declare:'we may more properly term her a Roman-Protestant than a Roman Catholique...'[7].

Apart from the polemical works mentioned above I have been unable to locate many of the vernacular writings referred to slightingly by Stilting.[8] But the popular stream surfaces again in the nineteenth century. Thus Renard hoped in 1865 to inspire in the readers of his translation of the Vita 'le goût d'une vie sérieux et le désire de marcher dans les voies de la perfection!'[9] Another French translator of the Vita was even more specific when he wrote in 1907: 'Plaise à

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6. the work takes its notes on Hildegard's life from the Centuriators of Magdeberg.

7. The Nunns Prophesie:or the True, Wonderful, and Remarkable Prophesie of St Heldegard...concerning The Rise and Downfall of those Fire-Brands of Europe, the...JESUITS. (London, 1680).

8. See above p. 1. According to Schrader, 'Die Heimat...' StMGBO 54 (1936) 205, the first German translation of the Vita was that of J. Köbel in 1524.

9. J. Renard, Histoire de Sainte Hildegard (Paris, 1865) viii.

10. R. Chamonal, Vie de Sainte Hildegarde (Paris, 1907) Preface, unpaginated.

Dieu d'envoyer à notre Patrie bien-aimée quelques-unes de ces femmes fortes...'[10] At about the same time, in England, the Catholic Truth Society included Hildegard in its series Virgin Saints of the Benedictine Order (Price 1d).[11] In Germany the tradition shows no sign of flagging, judging by the numerous articles cited by Lauter in such publications as the Wochenschrift fur katholische Lehrerinnen, Das Himmelreich: Sonntagesblatt für Katholische Deutschland, Der Brunnen, Zeitschrift für die katholische Frauenjugend, and more.[12]

Such writings are obviously not intended as works of original scholarship. Yet they may be expected to reflect the current state of knowledge about Hildegard. Unfortunately this is often not the case, as a few examples will show. Thus the Chamonal translation identified St Rupert with Robert of Molesmes, the founder of Citeaux, while in Virgin Saints... Hildegard is said to have been the only child of her parents, although by the time it was written several of her siblings had been identified.[13]

Trithemius should no doubt be taken as the earliest representative of the alternative school of Christian scholarship. Although his testimony was not always reliable, and in fact he has been responsible for the introduction of several false trails into Hildegard studies,

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11. 'OSB', Virgin Saints of the Benedictine Order IX (London, ?1906).

12. See Lauter, Bibliographie I, nos. 620,662,663,676,709,714,751,774. etc.

13. See above pp. 19f.

14. See also M. Schrader, 'Trithemius und die heilige Hildegard "von Bermersheim"', Archiv.f.mrh K. 4 (1952) 171-184. Indeed the first publisher of the Scivias went no further than Trithemius. See Jacques Lefebre d'Etaples, Liber trium virorum & trium spiritualium virginum (Paris, 1513) introductory letter, f. 2v.

his work has proved the starting point for many later researchers.[14] He sought to extend his knowledge of Hildegard by talking to the nuns at Rupertsberg and by examining and copying the works of Hildegard which he found there. He was not afraid to pit his historical judgment against theirs when he wrote of the Riesenkodex: 'quod moniales istius loci eam propria manu scripsisse falso confirmant'.[15] In the eighteenth century, the Bollandist, J. Stilting, subjected Trithemius' writings about Hildegard to the critical scrutiny which made the Acta Sanctorum a model of textual criticism and emergent historical method.[16] Although their methods were based largely on the study of manuscript and printed sources, the Bollandists also visited monasteries, investigated relics and recorded oral traditions. So Stilting recorded a description by two earlier Bollandists, Papebroch and Henschen, of their visit to Eibingen in 1660.[17]

Much of the general chronological outline of Hildegard's life was established by Stilting. He collected most of the contemporary and later chronicle references to her, including those by Vincent of Beauvais, Richer of Sens, and Alberic de Trois Fontaines. [18] While travelling in Belgium he learnt of an oral tradition linking Hildegard and St Gerlac, which led him to the account of Hildegard in the <u>Vita</u>

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15. 'Commentarius', 634.

16. For an account of the work of the Bollandists see H.Delehaye, <u>A travers trois siècles</u> (Bruxelles, 1920).

17. Rupertsberg was destroyed in the Swedish war in 1632, and after some time the Rupertsberg nuns combined with the foundation at Eibingen. Here the Bollandists saw Hildegard's body: 'et caput cincinnis ex rufo canescentibus obductam' and in the library, 'ingens volumen membranaceum erat Ms ac bicolumnare, continens omnia Opera S.Hildegardis...':'Commentarius', 677.

18. See below pp. 66ff.

Gerlaci.

Although working from a set of letters which he rightly suspected to be incomplete, he was able to identify many of Hildegard's correspondents and to make a fair attempt at dating some of the letters. His suggestion that Hildegard wrote to Bernard of Clairvaux before he wrote to her, thus reversing the order of the letters in the Riesenkodex, anticipated much of the later discussion of the nature of the letter collection.[19] Likewise, his suspicion that the letter 'Ad praelatos maguntinensis' was of a composite nature, was proved by its appearance as nine separate pieces in Ms B.[20] Other instances in which later evidence has proved Stilting's conjectures correct are the identification of Richardis of Stade as Hartwig of Bremen's sister and the subject of Henry of Mainz's letter to Hildegard, and the conclusion that Guibert of Gembloux did not complete a life of Hildegard.[21]

Stilting was, however, responsible for at least one red-herring when he claimed that Hildegard made a journey to Paris in the last decade of her life to seek approval for her books from the doctors of the University. Stilting gained this impression from a misreading of a passage in the Acta:[22]

> De circumstantiis dicit, quod cum libros ejus, scilicet librum Scivias, librum Vitae meritorum, librum Divinorum

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19. 'Commentarius', 638-9.

20. ibid., 667.

21. ibid., 639, 674-5

22. Although the version of the Acta which Stilting used was generally very corrupt, the passage in question does not differ from that printed by Bruder.

> operum, secundum monasterii sui exemplaria conscripsisset, et cum in peregrinatione ad beatum Martinum Thuronis ire disposuisset, libros iam dictos secum Parisius detulit et, securius in eis studere posset, ab episcopo loci, tunc praesidente, per multos labores et magnas tribulationes obtinuit, quod omnes in theologia tunc magistros convocavit legentes, et cuilibet eorum per tres quaternos ipsos libros ad examinandum dedit....[23]

The subject of the verb 'dicit' appears several paragraphs earlier as 'Bruno, custos sancti Petri in Argentina et presbyter'. Once this is understood the passage makes sense as it stands: '...when he had copied her books from the exemplars at his monastery (or possibly her monastery) and when he had arranged to go on a pilgrimage...he took the books mentioned with him to Paris, and so that he might study them with greater security, he managed with great labour and trouble...to have the bishop call all masters who were reading theology...and gave them the books to study for three months...'. Since medieval writers were often somewhat cavalier in their use of reflexive and non-reflexive pronouns, it is not clear where the exemplars were, but this hardly affects the argument.[24]

It is hard to understand why Stilting should have ascribed this activity to Hildegard, who was already quite secure in the belief of her divine inspiration. Stilting noted that two of the witnesses of the Acta claimed to have been studying theology in Paris at the time, and he used the fact to date Hildegard's supposed visit after 1173, 'ne dicere necesse sit, testes illos fuisse octogenariis majores'.[25] But this is just what we must suppose, when we find that Arnold,

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23. Bruder, 126.

24. Many examples of confusion of pronouns can be found in the Vita, particularly the second and third books.

25. 'Commentarius', 671.

scholasticus of St Peter at Mainz, and John, canon of Mainz and provost of Bingen, reaffirmed that they saw the books when they were students at Paris, in the forty-two half lines added at the end of the original instrument of 1233. Since the date of the addition must have been after 1243, the inquisitors would by then have been over ninety. While the Pope's entrusting the inquisition to a pair of nonagenarians is not quite beyond the bounds of possibility, the same Master John did not die until 1160.[26] This would make him, at a conservative estimate, at least one hundred and ten when he died. Something is obviously wrong here. But the problem does not arise if we allow that Bruno took the books to Paris after Hildegard's death, possibly in the first or second decades of the thirteenth century. This would also fit in with the mention of William of Auxerre, who was active at the University of Paris from about 1210.

Stilting, then, managed to fix the outline of Hildegard's life and fill in many of the details. He was limited by lack of familiarity with the range of Hildegard's works - the LeFebre edition of the Scivias and about half the total complement of Hildegard's letters being all he knew - and of archival materials. The discovery and exploitation of such sources, especially in the second half of the nineteenth century, introduced something of a renaissance in Hildegard studies.

An important prerequisite was the publication in 1844 of Volume 197 of Migne's Patrologia Latina, bearing the ambitious but misleading title: 'S. Hildegardis Abbatissae Opera Omnia'. Included in the volume

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26. Bruder, 129 n.1.

were Stilting's commentary, the Vita, and Acta from AASS; the 1513 edition of the Scivias, the LDO in Mansi's edition of 1761, and correspondence from the Riesenkodex. The claim of the Patrologia to represent all Hildegard's works was belied by the appearance in 1882 of Pitra's collection, consisting of previously unpublished materials, especially the LVM and two series of letters, from the Vienna Ms (Ms W) and the Gembloux collection (Ms G) which provided the necessary information to elucidate several aspects of Hildegard's life and work. [27] In 1903, Kaiser's edition of the Causae et Curae brought the publication of most of Hildegard's oeuvre to completion, although none of the works could be described as an adequate critical edition.

Two major works, reflecting the current state of Hildegard studies, should be mentioned here. That of Schmelzeis was published in 1879 to coincide with the seven-hundredth anniversary of Hildegard's death, while May's substantial work of 1911 was able to draw on the further work of Pitra, Herwegen and Kaiser.[28] Schmelzeis made few real advances on Stilting, although he was able to incorporate more material from Hildegard's own works, much of which he was happy to translate without further comment. He did, however, point out the error of supposing Hildegard went to Paris, although for less than compelling reasons.[29] May's book, coming some thirty years later, had the advantage of the important scholarly work done in the intervening

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27. See esp., 'Collaborateurs'.

28. J-P. Schmelzeis, Das Leben und Wirken der Heiligen Hildegardis (Fribourg-en-Brisgau, 1879.) J.May Die heilige Hildegard von Bingen. Ein Lebensbild (Munchen, 1911).

29. i.e. that Hildegard would not have copied her own books, and that no such visit is mentioned in the Vita: op. cit. 540

years. He was also able to use most of the archival material described in chapter I above, which he printed as an appendix. Such a wealth of historical detail is, however, somewhat disconcertingly combined with a highly fanciful style. To cite but one example, the premonitory sentence

> Mit Volmar, Hugo und Hiltrud waren drei leuchtende Sterne am Himmel der Seherin untergegangen, und schon breitete der Engel des Todes auch über sie seine dunkeln Schwingen

is followed some pages later by an imaginative reconstruction of the deathbed scene: Vomar having given the last rites, 'Es wird still, sehr still. Die Augen brechen, die Hände werden weiss wie Wachs, der Puls stockt - Sie war hinübergegangen in der Umarmung ihres geliebten Herrn.'[30]

Since May, no one has attempted a synthesis of Hildegard's life on such a scale (533pp.). Additions to the field of Hildegard scholarship have been made piecemeal, both by what May termed 'die christliche Historiker' and others whose affiliations are less obvious.[31]

ii. Problems of Interpretation.

It has been amply shown that much of our knowledge of Hildegard comes from the researches of avowedly Christian writers, whose critical judgment in matters of literary or historical scholarship is of a high order. It is, however, in matters of interpretation that we might expect to find some difference between the Christian and secular

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30. May, op. cit., 467, 481-2.

31. Prominent among the first group are the nuns Schrader, Führkötter; to the second belong the archivists van der Linde and Roth, Jessen, Kaiser, Leibeschütz, Dronke and Derolez.

approaches, as Battandier suggested. In the course of her life Hildegard was thought to have displayed miraculous powers. Those described in the third book of the Vita, including exorcism and healing of the sick are familiar in hagiographical contexts and the literature which deals with such matters, both from the christian and secular view-points, is extensive. More unusual was what she saw as the miraculous or supernatural intervention which enabled her to produce writings for public circulation. Just what this process was thought to entail is an important means of distinguishing among different interpretations of Hildegard's life and work, and so deserves closer scrutiny. Obviously how one interprets her claim depends on one's existing beliefs, particularly those which have to do with the place of divine intervention in the affairs of man. The second element involved is a judgment on the veracity of the sources, particularly that of Hildegard herself.

As might be expected, the less scholarly accounts which tend towards popular edification do not question either premiss or inquire into the process by which the vision attained its written form. So 'OSB' wrote in Virgin Saints...: '...no one can fail to see how, naturally speaking, she could never have invented or conceived such ideas, and that she was, as she truly felt, merely God's mouthpiece'.[32]

Stilting, on the other hand, although he did not question the divine origin of Hildegard's visions, sought to apportion responsibility

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32. op. cit., 1. The author of this work, in line with the large part he attributes to God, claimed that Hildegard was 'never taught to read': op.cit., 3.

33. He says he used the Vita, Scivias preface and passages 'ex variis ipsius scriptis quae partim edita non sunt': 'Commentarius', 633.

after the event, in line with Hildegard's descriptions.[33] He concluded that Hildegard had never been taught Latin, but could understand writings in that language by divine illumination.[34] Moreover he concluded that Hildegard had learnt to write (in contradiction to Trithemius) and he described the process as follows.

> Visiones suas vernaculo sermone explicabat, verba vero Latina, quae in iis audiebat, manu sua scribebat, prout audierat. Deinde, ipsa dirigente, Godefridus (sic) omnia faciebat Latina, omniaque apte connectebat.[35]

Schmelzeis, while apparently entertaining the possibility that Hildegard learnt to write in a miraculous way, drew the line at the idea that she could have written all her works with her own hand because of her frequent illnesses. That would have needed another miracle and '...lag es aber durchaus nicht in der Absicht des Herrn'.[36]

Pitra believed that Hildegard knew Latin and that her knowledge had been gained by natural means, partly through regular performance of the opus dei and by memorising 'innumeras paginas sacras'.[37] However, he was also convinced that Hildegard's works were directly inspired by God, putting much weight on the fulfilment of her prophetic utterances, as explained by Stilting, and the fact that her works had been approved by the Council of Trier, the University of Paris, and Pope Gregory IX.[38] Herwegen too, in his article on Hildegard's

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34. This is obviously his gloss on the Scivias preface.

35. 'Commentarius', 634.

36. op. cit., 82.

37. Pitra, vi,vii.

38. Pitra, xvi,xvii.

collaborators, was much concerned with the question of her educational formation. He concluded:

> La culture littéraire de sainte Hildegarde se bornait a savoir lire et ecrire. Avec cette formation, elle entreprit, obeissante à l'ordre de Dieu, et l'âme remplie de crainte, d'annoncer au monde ses admirables révélations.[39]

Once again May's work can be taken as representative of the non-tendentious Christian tradition of Hildegard studies. He explains her description of herself as unlearned as meaning only that 'sie in ihrer Jugend keinen methodischen und wissenschaftlichen Unterricht genossen, wie des in den Mönchsklöstern herkommlich war'.[40] May explored in some detail the possibilities of Hildegard gaining a non-formal education, elaborating on the demands of the opus dei, suggesting contact with Bishop Siward of Uppsala (a sometime guest at Disibodenberg) as a stimulus to her studies of the natural world, and especially discussions with 'ihrem treuen und bescheidenen Mitarbeiter Volmar'.[41] Yet while reducing the miraculous element in Hildegard's work to this extent, he still does not deny some form of divine inspiration, for the following reasons:

> Ihre prophetische Predigt, ihr mystisches Schauen, ihr Lebensarbeit zur sittlichen Hebung der damaligen Generation, all das trägt so sichtlich den Stempel göttlicher Einwirkung, dass es für den christlichen Historiker vermessen wäre, sie ihrer übernatürlichen Würde zu entkleiden.[42]

While tending increasingly to reduce the miraculous element in

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39. 'Collaborateurs', 197.

40. op. cit., 19.

41. op. cit., 20,36,54.

42. ibid., 58.

Hildegard's production of her writings, all the authors mentioned above wish to maintain some form of her claim to divine inspiration. Once again, the relationship of Hildegard's writings to her 'vision', and her vision to its ultimate source, is explained with varying sophistication. The simplest model, that of the tabula rasa was favoured by Hildegard herself and her earliest biographers. Here the contribution of the human recipient to the divine message is minimal. Moreover Hildegard claimed that she knew and wrote only about the things that she had seen in her vision. She expressed this idea constantly, using such images as the feather sustained by the wind, the trumpet blown by God and other instrumental imagery. The idea that the subject or instrument was not capable of formulating the message from his or her own intellectual resources was obviously a strong argument for outside help. Whether such help was human or divine could only be judged by considering all the other circumstances. A mediaeval example of such reasoning was applied to a supposed prophecy of Thomas Becket. The words he produced were accepted as divinely inspired since they revealed a facility in versification to which he could not have aspired, given his rather limited education.[43] According to contemporary catholic theologians, this form of argument is still valid. One writes:

> When the content in question is not merely correct but of a depth and doctrinal balance which surpasses the capacity of the subject who is presenting it...then it can be used as a criterion of discernment.[44]

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43. From Herbert of Bosham. See B. Smalley, The Becket Conflict and the Schools (Oxford, 1973) 110.

44. L. Volken, Visions, Revelations and the Church (New York, 1963) 156.

The problem here is to try to compare the content with Hildegard's capacities and to reconcile the result with her own testimony. Several writers, Pitra, Herwegen, May, Rozumek and Führkötter among them, make the point that although Hildegard had little or no formal education, she would have been able to attain by informal methods, such as conversation or oral learning, the level of scientific and theological knowledge exemplified in her works.[45] Yet these commentators have not seen the need to dispense with divine inspiration altogether. Instead of divine intervention, the model is more like one of cooperation, where God works his revelations in the material which he finds at his disposal, producing them from a combination of divine and natural elements. This cooperant view is well expressed by Fischer when he quotes with approval the remark of Wassmann, a jesuit zoologist, 'doch auch die Gabe der Naturforschungen ein wahres Gottes geschenke sei'.[46]

There has been, then, a tendency towards reducing the miraculous element in Hildegard's works, even among explicitly Christian writers, but their acceptance of Hildegard as a saint presents further problems. Although there are several definitions of sainthood, all have in common a particular relationship to God with respect to his bestowal of grace.[47] Moreover, once Hildegard is accepted as a saint,

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45. And once it is allowed that Hildegard could read and write Latin there is no reason for her not to have obtained knowledge through written sources. Indeed, it will be argued that Hildegard admits that she did. See below p. 151.

46. H. Fischer, op. cit., 12.

47. See e.g. D. Knowles, The Historian and Character and other Essays (Cambridge, 1963), esp. 33ff., on St Bernard; D. Attwater, The Penguin Dictionary of Saints (Harmondsworth, 1965) 11.

then some aspects of ordinary historical methodology are jeopardised. It becomes, indeed, impossible to question Hildegard's testimony in the same way that the claims of others can and should be scrutinised. Unconsciously misleading statements may just be countenanced, but the possibility of deliberate falsehood is rendered inconceivable. The latitude allowed a saint in such areas is also unclear. Thus Pitra could suggest that Hildegard was employing false modesty in her description of her literary skills.[48] Herwegen, on the other hand, would not allow even this venial departure from the truth, declaring 'mais le savant cardinal nous paraît aller trop loin quand il pense que la Sainte exagère dans la préface du Scivias'.[49]

Those writers, then, who accept Hildegard's sanctity and the ontological and theological implications and preconditions atta ched to it are left in a methodological quagmire. For if Hildegard was especially favoured by God (as her subsequent canonisation attests), and if, with God all things are possible, there is no need to seek for further explanations. Indeed, it may be positively dangerous to do so, as Cuno thought, when confronted by Hildegard immobilised on her bed.[50] No doubt Andrew of St Victor was ahead of his time when he suggested (in the context of biblical exegesis) that miracles should only be resorted to when no natural explanation was possible.[51]But

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48. Pitra, vii.

49. 'Collaborateurs', 195.

50. Appendix, 6.

51. Andrew of St Victor, Comment. in Ezech., 'Verumtamen in scripturarum expositione cum secundum naturam res de qua agitur nullatenus fieri potest tunc demum ad miracula confugienda noverit': B. Smalley The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages (Notre Dame, 1964) 388-9.

such a guideline was hard to apply for the witnesses of Hildegard's life, caught up in media res, dazzled by her charismatic personality and having only fairly crude hypotheses for explaining medical and psychological phenomena. So too, the assumption of her biographers that Hildegard was a candidate for sainthood, if not their conscious promotion of her in these terms, must have inclined them to favour divine rather than natural explanations for events in her life.

To a greater or lesser degree the problem of where to draw the line between nature and supernature has bedevilled all subsequent writers subscribing to similar views. The lack of any but the vaguest criteria for deciding which realm to favour in particular instances has led to such esoteric debates as whether Hildegard's ability to write was vouchsafed through a separate miracle, in addition to that which gave her an understanding of Latin.[52] On the whole, however, the circumstances in which Hildegard wrote her works tend to be explained naturally - that is, she had learnt to read and write as a child, and she had some acquaintance with Latin - while the supernatural element has tended to be located in the visions themselves.[53]

So Führkötter, in her introduction to Das Leben wrote of :

> ...das Charisma ihrer Schau, eine Gabe, die letzlich Hildegards Geheimnis bleibt, wenn auch Mediziner, Psychologen und Theologen sich intensiv bemüht haben, dieses Phänomen zu erklären.[54]

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52. See above p. 53. 'Collaborateurs', 196-7; Schmelzeis, op. cit., 82.

53. Whether the works reflect nothing but the vision is a matter for debate, but the reality of the vision itself is not.

54. Das Leben, 15.

Here, Fuhrkotter must mean general explanations of visions, rather than those of Hildegard's visions in particular, which are few in number. Indeed, the only psychological explanation of any note is that of Hattemer.[55]

This article takes as its basic theoretical concept, a certain personality type, 'le hyperintégré'.[56] Whatever merits the original theory might have had, Hattemer's attempts to reconcile concepts found in the writings of Teresa of Avila with those of Jaensch and use them to throw light on Hildegard's experiences are less than convincing.[57] Much more suggestive than this psychological explanation is that put forward by Singer in 1917.[58] His claim that Hildegard's visions had a 'pathological basis' has understandably found little favour among more theologically oriented writers. Doubtless his belief that Hildegard 'was not a saint in any intelligible sense of the word' predisposed him to such an explanation, just as it might have

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55. 'Les Phénomènes mystiques extraordinaires et l'integration', Etudes Franciscaines 48 (1936) 445-461.

56. Derived apparently from E. R. Jaensch, Grundformen menschlichen Seins (Berlin, 1929).

57. Such examples as the following do not inspire confidence in either writer: '..ce tempérament spécial est aussi indiqué par les yeux noirs et les cheveux bruns, comme il était chez sainte Thérèse...Jaensch remarque que beaucoup d'Espagnols sont de grand intégration': op. cit., 450. Besides, there is no reason to think that Hildegard was of this physical type; the only indication we have of Hildegard's appearance comes from the Bollandists description of her relics. See 'Commentarius', 677.

58. 'Views', 51ff.

59. 'Views', 53. Singer must have been working from a 'secular' notion of sanctity in which supreme moral goodness seems to be the criterion, hence his reference to Hildegard's 'defects of character'. Since he failed to grasp the medieval notion of sanctity (or indeed, the modern catholic view) he could make the above claim. He was also wrong, in denying that 'the verdict of the church' came down in Hildegard's

prejudiced others against it.[59]

In considering Hildegard as a saint it is possible to steer a line between Singer's misunderstanding of the concept, and a full acceptance of Hildegard as a saint in ontological terms, with all that implies.[60] I have already pointed out the general methodological drawbacks of the theistic approach. If a belief in Hildegard's actual sanctity is added to this, the writer's attention is further channelled in a certain direction. Here the saint's achievements and influence are to be explained by the special relationship between God and his chosen soul. While ideas of proving sanctity might change over time, the essence of sanctity is a-historical, and a-social, based on the arbitrary bestowal of God's grace. Moreover, while one could aspire to lead a saintly life, it was hardly a role that could be claimed for oneself during life. Sainthood could only be formally recognised and proved after death. Indeed, sometimes the honour was only conferred at all because of the manner of death, as in martyrdom. While the performance of miracles was a good indication of sanctity, and indeed, the *sine qua non* of canonisation, even miracles might misleadingly arise from natural or diabolical causes. Finally, while spectacular personal holiness might have exemplary uses, it did not require its possessor to engage actively in governing or reforming the church. Caesarius of Heisterbach presents several examples of humble, non-assertive saints or near-saints.[61] For these reasons, the

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favour; see above, p. 41 and chapter VII below.

60. i.e., a fairly narrow doctrine of grace.

61. Caesarius of Heisterbach, *The Dialogue on Miracles* tr. H. Scott and C. Bland (London, 1929). See especially the section: 'On Singleness of Heart'.

category of saint has little value in explaining the Hildegard phenomenon, while for the reasons mentioned earlier it predisposes the enquirer to look in the wrong direction.

Likewise, the description of Hildegard as a 'mystic' suffers from similar methodological drawbacks. Besides being unhelpful, the term is also misleading.[62] Hildegard's experiences were generally quite distinct from those we associate with the great catholic mystics, or even the lesser ones. [63] But if the concept of sainthood is not adequate to explain Hildegard's work and achievements, modern secular equivalents hardly fare better. If the attitudes of Hildegard's contemporaries are to be taken into account as well as her intentions and capacities, to say that Hildegard was a woman of genius does not get us very far. First, even in its modern sense it has little more than circularity to commend it. The proof that Hildegard was a woman of genius was that she wrote the works she did. More importantly, to her contemporaries 'a woman of genius' would have been something of a contradiction in terms, and certainly not sufficient to guarantee her writings an audience either among the hierarchy of the church or the laity [64] For similar reasons, the idea that Hildegard was some sort of

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62. As Führkötter remarks: 'Hildegard ist nicht an den Anfang einer Linie zu stellen, die von ihr zu Gertrud von helfta und Mechthild von Magdeburg führen würde': Das Leben, 16. Even less can she be classed in 'the age of Meister Eckhart, John Tauler...Catherine of Siena, the unknown author of the Cloud of Unknowing...', as does J.B. Russell, Medieval Civilisation (New York, 1968) 520.

63. A comparison between Hildegard's writing and that of the English mystic, Julian of Norwich throws light on the differences. Hildegard's visions are intellectual, while Julian's almost entirely affective. See further below, chapter V.

64. See below, chapter IV.

65. Of course it could be maintained that Hildegard was unconsciously,

proto-feminist is hard to maintain. [65]

But if the concepts of sainthood, genius, mystic or feminist, are not useful in explaining Hildegard's achievments and their reception among her contemporaries, there is a further description which has often been used, but without realising its full implications. I refer to the description of Hildegard as a 'prophetess'. It should be noted that the medieval understanding of the word 'prophecy' was broader than its modern meaning, which is almost exclusively concerned with the prediction of future events. Then it signified: 'Rerum latentium praeteritum aut praesentium aut futurarum ex divina inspiratione manifestatio'. [66]

Prophecy, understood in the medieval sense, is a key concept for a proper understanding of Hildegard's life and work, since it helps explain both how she justified to herself what she was doing and how she assumed a role which legitimised her remarkable actions in the eyes of her contemporaries. The concept of prophecy supplies a link between knowledge and authority which is central to an understanding of Hildegard's work. The more nebulous concept of sainthood has no such implications. Whereas the roles of saint, genius or mystic are inward (or perhaps upward) looking, involving at most a dyadic relationship between the subject and God, the role of the prophet implies a three-part relationship, between the prophet, God and society. It is only in the context of the medieval understanding of

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or objectively, a feminist because of what she did. On the other hand Hildegard's pronouncements on the relationship of the sexes and all the evidence about how she saw herself lead to the opposite conclusion. See further, chapter IV.

66. From the Glossa Ordinaria prologue to the Psalter, quoted Smalley, Study of the Bible, 18-19.

such ideas that a proper appreciation of Hildegard can be reached. Moreover, this approach is vindicated when we turn to examine the way Hildegard's contemporaries wrote about her and the way Hildegard described herself.

## CHAPTER THREE: HILDEGARD AS PROPHET

> Erat eo tempore in partibus Maguntiae virgo quaedam sanctissima Hildegardis nomine, famosissima illa Prophetissa novi Testamenti; cum qua familiariter locutus est Deus, et ostendit ei secreta caelestia.
>
> Vita Gerlaci, AASS V Januarii. 309.

We have already seen that in the Glossa Ordinaria the gift of prophecy was defined as divinely inspired knowledge of past, present and future. Yet today the principal meaning of the word has been narrowed to the last sense, 'the foretelling of future events'.[1] This particular emphasis can be traced back as least as far as the New Testament. Here the Greek word 'προφήτης('one who speaks forth'), is used for the Hebrew 'נָבִיא'-'nabi' (from a root meaning 'to divulge') to refer to the Old Testament prophets.[2]

Whatever the functions of the prophets in Old Testament times, from an early Christian perspective their words were to be interpreted as predictions of events relating to Christ's kingdom and its anticipated accomplishment.[3] For this reason David is numbered among the OT

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1. OED, s.v. 'prophecy', 4: 'The foretelling of future events; orig. as an inspired action; extended to foretelling by any means; an instance of this. Now the ordinary sense.'

2. See Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, ed. J.H. Thayer (Edinburgh, 1896) 552-4, from which the above is condensed.

3. For a discussion of the various theories see W. Zimmerli, The Law and the Prophets, transl. R.E. Clements (New York, 1967).

4. David, Acts 2:30f. John the Baptist, Matt. 21:26; Mark 6:15; 11:32; Luke 1:76; 20:6; Jesus, Matt. 21:11; John 6:14.

prophets, while later John the Baptist and Jesus himself receive the title.[4] It is against this background that we should view the descriptions of prophecy and prophets appearing in the apostolic age among Christians.[5]

An important passage for understanding prophecy in the apostolic context is 1 Corinthians 12-14, where prophecy appears in a list of charismatic gifts later to be developed as the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. It is clear from the passage that Paul was referring to a generalised knowledge of the divine mysteries, rather than a particular power to foretell the future.[6] Hildegard saw herself as one who was privy to the divine mysteries. Since she was interested in the entire Heilsgeschichte, Hildegard's works are necessarily involved with eschatology, as they are with an account the world's beginning.[7] Given the general eschatological preoccupations of the time it is not surprising that this particular aspect of her work provoked a good deal of interest.[8]

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5. Matt. 10:41; 23:34; Acts 15:32; 1 Cor. 14:29,37; Rev.22:6,9.

6. See H. Conzelman, 1 Corinthians (Hermaneia - A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible) (Philadelphia, 1975; 1st German edn. 1969.

7. Heilsgeschichte - redemptive history; for a discussion of the term see O. Cullman, Christ and Time (London, 1967) 1st german edn., 1946. 26-7; For example in the Scivias the eschatological sections are confined to the last three (out of thirteen) visions of the third book.

8. 'For medieval people the stupendous drama of the Last Judgment was not a phantasy about some remote and indefinite future but a prophecy which was infallible and which at almost any given moment was felt to be on the point of fulfilment': N. Cohn, The Pursuit of the Millenium (London, 1970) 35. For other manifestations see J.Wright, ed. The Play of Antichrist (Toronto, 1967).

i. The Pentachronon and Narrative Sources.

Further impetus towards considering Hildegard as one who could foretell the future was given by the selection made from her works by Gebeno, Prior of Eberbach in 1220, which he called the Pentachronon.[9] Gebeno selected the writings which concerned 'praesentem miserum statum Ecclesiae, et omnia futura pericula, et Adventum Antichristi.'[10] He justified his work as a populariser by claiming that many 'fastidiunt et abhorrent' to read Hildegard because of her unusual and difficult style, 'non intelligentes quod hoc est argumentum verae prophetiae'.[11] That Gebeno's work fulfilled a need is proved by the numerous surviving copies of the Pentachronon, compared with the relatively few copies of Hildegard's own books.[12] Indeed, Gebeno's extracts eclipsed the genuine works of Hildegard to some extent and for many provided the only acquaintance with her thought. While this is obviously true for some of the later polemical users of Hildegard in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, it is also true, but less obvious, in the case of references to Hildegard in more nearly contemporary chronicles, to which I will now turn.

Hildegard's reputation in the century following her death can be guaged from several surviving chronicles. Of these, Alberic of Trois Fontaines, a Cistercian, wrote for the year 1099, 'Nata est in

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9. See Pitra, 483-489.

10. ibid., 485.

11. ibid.

12. ibid., 483: 'Innumeri sunt codd. Gebenonis in varias Europae bibliothecas sparsi...'. We may compare this with the eleven complete mss of the Scivias (until 1945), described by Dronke in 'Problemata', 99, and the unique Copenhagen Ms of Causae et Curae.

Alemannia quedam virgo mirabilis, que dicta est sancta Hildegardis, de cuius libris et prophetia mirabili quedam Deo dante intendimus declarare', which he then proceeded to do under the years 1141, 1153, 1155 and 1170. However, all his information comes from some form of Gebeno's work rather than from first hand acquaintance with that of Hildegard.[13]

So too, the Annales Stadenses contains the following description:

> Fecit autem tres libros, scilicet librum sci vias, librum divinorum operum, et librum epistolarum, et hoc, Deo iubente, ymmo cogente, in quibus valde quaedam utilia de futuris temporibus et de antichristo prophetavit, et miserum statum ecclesiae futurum praevidit spiritu prophetico et praedixit.[14]

Once again the wording of the entry shows its source to have been Gebeno's extracts. The Annales Palidenses, however seems to draw on a different tradition.[15] Linking Hildegard with her neighbour, Elisabeth of Schönau, the entry for 1158 reads:

> His etiam diebus in sexu fragili signa potentie sue Deus ostendit, in duabus ancillis suis, Hildegard videlicet in monte Ruperti iuxta Pinguiam et Elisabeth in Schonaugia, quas spiritu prophetie replevit, et multa eis genera visionem...revelavit.

That the writer is thinking of the wider meaning of prophecy is indicated by the fact that, passing rapidly over Hildegard, he goes on to describe at some length Elisabeth's success in providing information about the background of the eleven thousand virgins - an

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13. Cf. his mention only of the Scivias, LDO and letters, with Gebeno, Pitra, 483.

14. Annales Stadenses. MGH ss. XVI, 330.

15. Annales Palidenses, MGH ss. X, 90.

16. See below p. 179.

exercise of inspired hindsight, rather than foreknowledge.[16]

Evidence of first-hand knowledge of Hildegard is found in the so-called Chronicle of William Godell. The work was, in fact written by a Cistercian monk from Pontigny near Autun, who made a journey to Rupertsberg in 1172.[17] His emphasis on the amazing nature of Hildegard's divinely inspired writings, rather than her prophecies about the future, more closely reflects the nature of her works than the one-sided impression provided by Gebeno's excerpts. It appears that 'William Godell' was the source for Vincent of Beauvais' mention of Hildegard in his Speculum Historiale. Führkötter plausibly explains the introduction of the idea that Hildegard was subject to trances, found in the Speculum, as a corruption of the earlier writer's 'rapta in summis', to 'rapta in somnis'.[18] This suggests that the Speculum Historiale was the source for the reference to Hildegard in the Chronicon Guillemi de Nangiaco for the year 1146.[19]

Before leaving references to Hildegard in chronicles, the Annales Zwifaltenses should be considered. Here a brief mention of Hildegard under the year 1142 reads: 'His temporibus liber Scivias multum chatholicus cuidam incluse nomine Hiltgardis a Deo revelatus est'.[20] Although the emphasis here is on Hildegard's writings, rather than her

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17. Chronicon quod dicitur Wilhelmi Godelli MGH ss. XXVI, 198ff. (William Godell was an English monk from St Martial at Limoges.)

18. Echtheit, 9.

19. The editor notes the possible confusion of 'summis' and 'somnis', but without reference to Vincent of Beauvais; see H.Geraud (ed) Chronique latine de Guilliaume de Nangis de 1113 à 1300 (Paris, 1843), 39.

20. Annales Zwifaltenses MGH ss. X, 56.

prophetic activities, the description is apparently a fourteenth-century interpolation, and thus disqualifies the entry for our assessment.

The sources already considered show something of Hildegard's reputation among later generations and in the wider world. The tradition that chiefly ascribes eschatological prophecy to her has been seen to derive largely from the extracts of Gebeno, whose interests lay in that direction, as he explained in his prologue.[21] Führkötter argues that Gebeno did Hildegard a disservice by concentrating on a single aspect of her work and promoting it so successfully.[22] But what was the case before Gebeno's intervention? In order to find out how Hildegard's contemporaries saw her we have two rather dissimilar sources, the biographies and Hildegard's correspondence.

Strictly speaking, the evidence of Hildegard's biographers reflects to a great extent the views that they held, or indeed, wished to promote, about Hildegard's gifts rather than being a reflection of public opinion. This is especially true in their editorial commentary, but also holds to some extent for their presentation of the events of Hildegard's life. Bearing this in mind we may turn first to the *Vita* of Godfrey and Theodoric.

The *Vita* reports not only the fact that Hildegard wrote all her works at the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, but depicts her as possessing other charismatic gifts. They include the power of healing,

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21. Pitra, 484

22. *Echtheit*, 8 n. 30.

of casting out devils, of discerning people's inmost thoughts, of knowing the fate of individual souls and predicting her own death.[23] With the possible exception of her prediction of her own death, further reference to all these activities is found in other sources.[24]

But if Godfrey and Theodoric present in their Vita a picture of the well-rounded charismatic personality, the editorial comment, especially that of Theodoric, emphasises Hildegard's prophetic gifts. Godfrey, perhaps because of the nature of the segment of Hildegard's life which he treats (up to her move to Rupertsberg), makes his closing chapters a commentary on how Hildegard combined the active and contemplative lives.[25] Such a combination of lifestyles also describes the prophetic role, although Godfrey does not spell this out.

The identification is, however, made by Theodoric who wrote in the prologue to Book Two: 'ex uerbis ipsius Deo dilecte uirginis tanta elucet claritas prophecie, ut nichil minus ab antiquis patribus uideatur percepisse gracie.'[26] In the following chapter he refers to 'alia...multa secreta prophetico spiritu' given expression in her books, letters, songs, and the unknown alphabet and language.[27] Chapter Three of the second book describes, by means of a gloss on the

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23. See esp. the third book of the Vita passim.

24. e.g. the correspondence and the Acta.

25. Appendix, 8-9.

26. Appendix, 10.

27. See above p. 33; Appendix, 11.

Song of Songs, the working of the Holy Spirit in Hildegard.[28] The next chapter describes how Hildegard dealt with those who came to Rupertsberg seeking her advice. She was able to respond appropriately to requests because 'uero prophetico spiritu cogitationes et intentiones hominum cognoscebat', and was also able to weed out frivolous inquiries.[29] Connected to this was her ability to see into 'uitam hominum et conuersationem', not only of the present but the future.

Theodoric also makes explicit comparisons between Hildegard and Old Testament prophets. In his explanation of the miraculously appearing letters on the altar cloth, he wrote:'sicut enim quondam Daniel in pariete uisas, sic ipsa in palla descriptas, in hunc modum exposuit litteras'.[30] He devotes an entire chapter to a comparison between Hildegard and her mountain convent, and Deborah who 'dwelt between Rama and Bethel'.[31] Here he makes the interesting comment that, according to Origen: 'prestat non minimam consolationem mulierum sexui et prouocat eius ne pro infirmitate sexus desperent, etiam prophecie gracie capaces se fieri posse...'.[32]

Although examples could be multiplied, those cited above are sufficient to demonstrate that the Vita of Godfrey and Theodoric depicts Hildegard performing actions consistent with the role of

28. Appendix, 14-15.

29. Appendix, 15.

30. Appendix, 34-35.

31. Appendix, 18-19

32. Appendix, 18-19. Führkötter identifies the quotation as coming from In libr. Iudicum, hom. v; PG12.970C: Das Leben, 154.

prophet, and that Theodoric at least makes the identification explicit. Before turning to the letters we will look at Guibert of Gembloux's uncompleted biography of Hildegard. Because a great deal of it is devoted to matters occurring before Hildegard began writing, there is not much scope for a depiction of Hildegard's prophetic powers. Even so, his comparison of Hildegard and her assistant Volmar, to Moses and Aaron, and the apposite quotation from Jeremiah, make it abundantly clear that Guibert ascribed a prophetic role to Hildegard.[33]

ii. Hildegard's correspondence.

In the absence of a critical edition of Hildegard's correspondence, the exploitation of this most useful source presents several difficulties, not least being the status of the letters to Hildegard in the Riesenkodex.[34] Schrader and Führkötter have done much to elucidate the composite and otherwise dubious nature of the letters there attributed to Hildegard with the aid of Mss Z and W, but without touching much on the problem of the letters to Hildegard.[35] The manuscripts which they use to unravel the histories of Hildegard's own letters, with very few exceptions, contain no letters to Hildegard. Since the correspondence in the Riesenkodex is arranged in the form of a letter to Hildegard followed by her reply, and if the replies have been subject to the compiler Wezelin's editorial interference (to the extent of combining letters to different people, changing the

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33. Pitra, 413-14.

34. See above p. 2.

35. Echtheit, 59-154.

addressees, and abbreviating them), we might wonder what liberties he has taken with the other letters. Schmeidler indeed suggested that the whole body of correspondence was a fabrication,[36] but since this has been disproved on Hildegard's side it seems unlikely that the letters to her have been invented from the whole cloth. It does, however, mean that the ascription of a letter to a particular named person is not certain unless it is verifiable from another source.[37] Even when the reply is attested in Ms Z or W and agrees in terms of addressee and text, this does not necessarily mean that the letter paired with it in Ms R is from the same person to whom the reply is directed. Bearing such caveats in mind, it is still possible to take the letters as in some sense representative of contemporary attitudes to Hildegard (even if, to take the minimalist position, only that of Wezelin himself).

An analysis of Hildegard's correspondence will provide us with information about how her correspondents saw her gifts. Such information comes from two sources. First, the form of address, together with the more extended description of the exordium, that is, more or less formal and explicit references; second, the content of the letter, involving the nature of the favour asked or request submitted, which is sometimes only implicit. It might be possible to discover differences in attitude among distinct groups of Hildegard's correpondents. For instance, were the rank and file of the monasteries more credulous than the hierarchy? Did laymen and popes

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36. With the exception of her letter to Bernard of Clairvaux.

37. A few letters do fall into this category, including the letters to Tengswich of Andernach and Elisabeth of Schönau.

see Hildegard in a different light? Another interesting question is whether the attitudes of Hildegard's contemporaries changed over time. The difficulty here is that even if we accept the ascription of the letters, many can only be dated within, say, the twenty years of a bishop's reign. Even this degree of certainty is hard to obtain for lesser correspondents.

The letters in the Riesenkodex are arranged according to the status of the sender. Thus letters from the popes are followed by those from archbishops, bishops and so on. Since a simple chronological approach is difficult, for the reasons mentioned above, I shall also use the hierarchical approach and start my analysis with the papal letters.

Although Hildegard wrote letters to several popes only one papal letter _to_ Hildegard can be considered genuine in the form in which it appears in the Riesenkodex.[38] It is a letter from Pope Eugenius III.[39] As Eugenius was the pope who first recognised Hildegard's writings as divinely inspired, his letter might be expected to express this belief. However the address is fairly neutral, '...dilecte in Christo filie, preposite sancti Roberti', while the _captatio_ makes no specific mention of prophetic knowledge, stating merely, 'Gaudemus, filia, et exsultamus in Domino, quod honestatis tue opinio ita longe et lateque diffunditur...'.[40] Indeed, as the following passage indicates, the

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38. For a summary of the controversy about the papal letters and the use of the _cursus_ as a test, see _Echtheit_, 111-23 and refs.

39. For the text from Ms Z, see _Echtheit_, 117-8. The letter appears in R with a changed ending, attributed to Pope Adrian IV.(PL197.153B-D).

40. For the five parts of the letter and the _ars dictaminis_ in general see G. Constable, _The Letters of Peter the Venerable_ (Cambridge, Mass., 1967) II, 29-45 and _Typology of the sources of the Western Middle Ages_, Fasc. 17 (Turnhaut, 1976).

tone of the letter is faintly admonitory:

> Unde, cum animum tuum usque adeo extimemus divini amoris igne succendi, ut ad bene operandum exhortatione aliqua non indigeas, supervacaneum duximus exhortaria tibi verba multiplicare, animumque tuum virtute divina sufficienter innixum aliqua verborum suppositione fulcire.

Nevertheless, he continues almost to the end of the letter in this vein, exhorting Hildegard

> usque ad finem in sancta conversatione persistite, ita creditas dispositione tue sorores salutis operibus instrue, ut cum eis pariter ad illud gaudium valeas prestante Domino pervenire...

The reason for his lack of enthusiasm becomes clear in the last couple of sentences of the letter, where mention is made 'illius sororis', whom Hildegard had conceded to Henry of Mainz. The letter, then, belongs in the context of the dispute over Richardis of Stade, and must be his answer to Hildegard's request for him to return her from Bassum.[41] The Pope's answer is legalistic and negative. Richardis should remain where she is unless she cannot observe the Rule in her new foundation.[42] Eugenius apparently enclosed a copy of his letter to Henry which made his intentions clear: 'Quod ex transcripto litterarum nostrarum tibi plenius innotescet'. Since the

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41. See above p. 32 and further chapter VI, below.

42. The text in Echtheit, 117-8 reads: 'mandamus quatinus vel illius sororis, que te fuit ei concessa, regulam faciat in loco ei commisso firmiter observari, vel eam ad magisterium tue discipline remittat.' Haug, 62,16 transcribed the same passsage as 'mandavimus, ut illius soror, quae a te fuit ei concessa,regulam faciat in loco ei commisso firmiter observari, et eam ad magisterium tuae disciplinae remittat.' The variation in the conjunctions makes a great difference to the meaning. The passage is included in the manuscript reproductions in Echtheit (Table XIX). From this it is clear that Haug has omitted 'quatinus'. It is also clear that the words transcribed by Schrader and Führkötter in both cases as 'vel' are not the same, although the final element seems identical.

letter which provoked such a reply is not extant, we can only speculate about the terms in which Hildegard pressed her case. If, however, her other letters in this correspondence are any guide, she may well have stressed her privileged knowledge of God's will. If so, it would hardly have done for the Pope to emphasise this aspect of her gifts when he intended to deny her request. Thus the particular context of the letter explains why Pope Eugenius, although he recognised Hildegard's divinely inspired gift in the context of her writings, found it prudent to concentrate on less explicit aspects of her holiness in this particular letter.

Similar circumstances are to be taken into account when we examine the exchange of letters between Hildegard and Alexander III, over twenty years later.[43] The correspondence here concerned a dispute between Hildegard and the monks of Disibodenberg over the election of a new provost when Volmar died. It will be recalled that as early as 1158 Hildegard had had the rights of the nuns of Rupertsberg to elect a provost from Disibodenberg inscribed in a charter.[44] Now, when it came to the point, the abbot refused to supply the nuns' choice to Hildegard. She wrote to the Pope to explain the position:

> ...ego et sorores meae genua nostra coram paterna pietate sua flectimus, orantes ut digneris paupertatem pauperculae formae respicere, quae nunc in magna tristitia sumus, eo quod abbas de monte sancti Disibodi et fratres ejus, privilegiis et electioni nostrae contradicunt quam semper habuimus.[45].

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43. Alexander's reply is addressed to Wezelin, Hildegard's nephew, but can still be used as an indication of his attitude to her.

44. See above, p. 11.

45. PL197.154C-155C.

The letter is unusual in that she does not invoke the 'living light' or other supernatural agents to support her case. Possibly she felt that the existence of the charter was sufficiently compelling.

Alexander's reply to Wezelin was in the same businesslike tone.[46] It empowered him to call the parties together and adjudicate the case. If the provost could not be obtained from Disibodenberg, the nuns were to be allowed another selection, as Hildegard sought in her letter. There is no mention of Hildegard's charismatic gifts and she is referred to as 'dilectae in Christo filiae nostrae Hildegard, priorissae montis S. Roberti in Binga', which is almost identical, except for the possessive, with the Pope's address to Wezelin himself: 'dilecto filio praeposito S. Andreae in Colonia...'.

Thus, although the papal letters to Hildegard do not produce many prophetic epiphets, their study is instructive since it proves the importance of viewing her correspondence in its historical context. The context is an important factor in Hildegard's exchanges with the Archbishops of Mainz, her diocesan superiors, with whom she often came into conflict over matters of authority and administration.

One such case has already been mentioned in connection with the papal letters. When the representatives of the cloister of Bassum sought to have Richardis released to take up her position as abbess, they sent an embassy to Henry of Mainz.[47] Since Henry's original letter to Hildegard was written in the midst of this controversy, it

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46. PL197.155D-156A.

47. Henry of Mainz, archbishop from 1142-1153, when he was deposed by the papal legates. See Briefwechsel, 35-37.

is not surprising to find his exordium restrained in its praise: 'Cum multa bona et admiranda miracula de te audiamus...'.[48] Obviously it was not the time to acknowledge Hildegard's privileged position when it came to ascertaining God's will, for this would severely undermine the very episcopal authority on which he had to rely: 'nos auctoritate praelationis et paternitatis nostrae tibi mandamus, et mandando injungimus.' On the other hand, it should be remembered that Henry had submitted Hildegard's works to the Synod of Trier and supported her move to Rupertsberg.[49]

Only one letter survives from Henry's ill-fated successor, Arnold of Seelenhofen.[50] The date and context of the letter cannot be ascertained, as it simply asks for Hildegard's prayers. However, the biblical allusions by which he seeks to win Hildegard's favour do not seem particularly well-chosen. Arnold acknowledged Hildegard's charismatic gifts with the comment:

> Nam quid mirum est, si ille inspiratione sua te docet,

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48. PL197.156B-C

49. A better indication of his views on the subject of Hildegard's prophetic gifts is found in the charter for the consecration of the Rupertsberg church. See above, p. 12. Likewise, Hildegard's reply to this letter was lacking in moderation, and she pressed her argument in a highly ad hominem manner. However, she was later to plead the archbishop's case in a letter to the pope and papal legates. See further Pitra, 520; Briefwechsel, 35-7.

50. Arnold I of Mainz came from a noble family in Rheinhesse. He became archbishop on Henry's deposition in 1153, and was Conrad III's chancellor. He came into conflict with Count Herman of Stahleck (1142-1156) and other nobles who had ravaged the see during his absences. The dispute was arbitrated by Barbarossa in 1155 in Arnold's favour. He fell foul of the king over his obligation to participate in his Italian campaign, and of the citizens of Mainz who refused the war tax. He excommunicated them and went to Italy in 1159. Hostility was renewed on his return in 1160 and Arnold was murdered on the steps of the monastery of St James in Mainz. See further Briefwechsel, 47.

> qui quondam agricultores et sycomores vellicantes prophetas constituit at asinam humana verba proferre fecit.[51]

Perhaps this lack of tact is a clue to his later difficulties.

Arnold's successor, Conrad of Wittelsbach, was archbishop from 1161 to 1165, when he was deposed by Frederick Barbarossa, who intruded Christian of Buch into the see. Conrad returned to Mainz on Christian's death in 1183 and held the see until his death in 1200. No letter of Conrad's to Hildegard survives, although she wrote him a letter of encouragement in 1165.[52]

Although Christian of Buch was not regarded as a particularly religious man, his surviving letters to Hildegard display a nice mixture of spiritual humility while keeping the administrative upper-hand.[53] In his first letter, which can only be dated after 1165, he acknowledged that 'divino Spiritu te inspiratam cognoscimus' - hardly a novel sentiment at this stage of Hildegard's career. The letter was apparently another request for Hildegard's prayers, as Christian recognised 'dum terreno regno exterius servire conamur, coelestem Regem multoties interius negligimus.'[54]

The second letter to Hildegard from Christian is part of the correspondence over the Rupertsberg interdict, and as such can be

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51. PL197.157C.

52. Pitra, 557.

53. Stilting's description of him as 'miles potius quam episcopus', op. cit. 669, is considerably milder than that of John of Salisbury, who used to refer to him as 'Antichrist': '...in ecclesiam Maguntinam velit intrudere illum non Christianum, sed antichristum, apostatam suam...': Millor and Brooke, op. cit., 54.

54. PL197.158A-C.

placed in 1179, the last year of Hildegard's life.[55] A good half of the letter is given over to a comparison of Hildegard's spiritual attainments with those of Christian, in such terms as the following:

> Etsi in admiranda ac laudanda potentia Dei et salvatoris nostri clementia, minime sufficientes, imo prorsus indigni sumus, tuo tamen ut digni efficiamur, charissima in Christo domina...

He pays tribute to her illumination 'vero et inaestimabili lumine' and alludes to 'manifesta sanctae conversationis tuae indicia et stupenda veritatis testimonia'. He affirms that he has 'summam post Deum in tua santitate fiduciam.' On the other hand, after such preliminaries, the archbishop did not make great concessions. Writing to say that he had instructed the clergy of Mainz to lift the interdict if they are satisfied that the deceased had been received back into the church, he ends his letter by begging Hildegard's forgiveness if he has vexed her 'ex culpa nostra vel ignorantia.'

The letters of the Archbishops of Mainz to Hildegard give a somewhat ambivalent impression of their attitudes to her spiritual accomplishments and status. While they were content to acknowledge her particular gifts in general terms, and even in specific terms where her writings were concerned, to do so in the course of the disputes described above, would have meant an abdication from their position of spiritual authority - a position to which they clung with some tenacity.

If the recognition of Hildegard's gifts was something of a two-edged sword for her immediate superiors in Mainz, a less equivocal response might be expected from her other episcopal correspondents, who wrote

55. PL197.159B-160D. See further below, chapter VI.

from sees as far apart as Prague in the East and Beauvais, in the West.[56] So Daniel of Prague, in a letter requesting Hildegard's support in prayer laments the fact that he cannot see her personally, 'sed magna difficultas locorum hoc fieri impedit'.[57] In his letter he refers to 'gratiam tibi a Deo collatam' and adds, in terms reminiscent of Hildegard's: 'eadam gratia...de vero lumine est.'

Possibly at about the same time, Henry of Beauvais, the brother of Louis VII of France, was writing to tell Hildegard that the 'manifesta Dei circa te dignatio mihi peccatori...est consolatio.'[58] Bishop Herman of Constanz also wrote in fairly general terms to solicit Hildegard's prayers.[59] He mentions that the 'fama sapientiae tuae', is widely diffused, and begs her assistance since 'cura terrena fere omnibus modis a servitio Dei me abstrahit...'

Hillin of Trier, despite some rather mixed metaphors, manages to convey his belief that Hildegard has been chosen by God according to the principle that the weak of the world are to confound the mighty.

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56. Hildegard's correspondence might be extended a good deal further east if PL197.178C-179B is indeed from the Patriarch of Jerusalem. Ms Z directs the reply to this letter to Adam of Ebra. See Haug, 70, Echtheit, 162. While this does not disprove the patriarch's authorship it casts some doubt on it.

57. PL197.177B-D. Prague was a suffragan see of Mainz. Daniel had studied in Paris and was probably consecrated by Henry of Mainz in 1149. He consecrated Christian of Buch archbishop in 1167 and died of malaria on 9 August of the same year.

58. PL197.180A-C. Henry was Bishop of Beauvais from 1141-1162 and Archbishop of Rheims from 1162-1175.

59. PL197.173D-174A. Herman of Arbon, consecrated priest and bishop by Innocent II in 1139. Herman was much concerned with the Emperor's affairs. In March 1153 he annulled the marriage between Adelheid of Volsberg and Barbarossa; in 1154 he accompanied the Emperor on his Italian campaign. Died 1165/6.

He adds that her role is also to inspire the minds of others to holy study.[60] His successor in the see, Arnold, wrote to Hildegard expressing doubts about his election.[61] He seems to be seeking his aunt's assurance that such a promotion represents the will of God: 'Si ex Deo esse sciremus, crederemus quod qui coepisset in nobis opus bonum, et perficeret, cum necessitate magis quam virtute, ad sacerdotium promoveri proponamus'.

A bishop of Liège writes to Hildegard 'in maxima mentis et corporis fluctuatione', conscious of having offended and irritated God in countless ways. Nevertheless he trusts that she will convey to him 'quidquid ex indeficienti et viventi lumine tibi ostensum fuerit ad excitandam somnolentiam meam'.[62] So too, Conrad of Worms looks to Hildegard to dispel the clouds which oppress his spirit.[63] Hildegard can do this, he asserts, 'ex radiis qui te Solem justitiae indubitanter illuminare credimus...'. On a less effusive note Adalbert of Verdun writes to advocate humility in the face of her visionary gifts, 'ut gratiam istam cum humilitate cognoscas'.[64] He cites the examples of Balaam (Num.24) and of St Paul, assuring her that it is 'magis fuducia mei affectus ad vos...quam praesumptione

60. PL197.166C-167A. Hillin was Archbishop of Trier from 1152-1169.

61. Arnold of Trier, formerly provost of St Andreas in Cologne and brother of Wezelin, was Archbishop of Trier from 1169-1183. PL197.181B-D. According to Schrader they were the sons of Wirichs of Walecurt and one of Hildegard's sisters. See 'Die Heimat...', 214.

62. PL197.175B. Ms R claims that the writer is Rudolph of Liège, a former pupil of Hildegard's brother Hugo at Mainz. But the reply with which it is paired is to Henry of Liège(1145-1164). See Echtheit, 101, 163 n.25.

63. PL197.173A-B

64. PL197.174C-D. Cf. Appendix, 4.

doctrine...', which prompt his admonitions. In doing so, however, he gives unmistakable evidence of assuming the reality of her gifts.

A further insight into their supposed nature is given by the request of Bishop Eberhard of Bamberg, who asks her 'quia Spiritu sancto imbuta es...' to explain a theological problem.[65] He expects the answer 'secundum quod deus tibi revelavit'. To this Hildegard replied with alacrity in a four-column letter.[66]

The last of Hildegard's episcopal correspondents to consider is Philip of Cologne, a frequent visitor to Rupertsberg.[67] He has no doubt that Hildegard is 'divino spiramine mirabiliter infus(a)'.[68] In asking for 'commonitoria verba' he remarks that it is common knowledge that 'te perfusam divini charismatis munere, de quo gaudet concio fidelis Ecclesiae'; he rejoices, 'scientes hominem carnis tegmine degentem, et juxts Apostoli vocem in coeli conversationem'. He ends his letter with a plea for her to share the gift of her knowledge, since 'in sapientia et thesauro abscondito, juxta veridicum, non est utilitas'.

These examples suggest that Hildegard's gifts were recognised by many members of the upper clergy, and not just those in her immediate vicinity. Moreover such recognition is spread over time, and

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65. PL197.167D. Eberhard II of Bamberg (1146-1170).

66. PL197.168B-171D.

67. Philip of Heinsberg, provost of Liège, deacon (1156) and provost (1165) of Cologne cathedral; administrator of the diocese in the absence of Rainald of Dassal; 1166 chancellor of the kingdom, 1167 Archbishop of Cologne. Died 1191 near Naples while accompanying Henry VI to Italy.

68. PL197.183B-D

encompasses both sides of the political fence. (Indeed our sample seems to contain a high proportion of the 'emperor's men'.) Hildegard's powers were acknowledged to come from a divine source, and to embrace both theological knowledge and more general wisdom. For this reason Hildegard was often sought as counsellor and comforter. While few of her episcopal correspondents use the word 'prophetissa' of her, or its equivalents, it is clear that they all attribute such qualities to her.

The Riesenkodex collection provides further valuable insights into the way in which Hildegard's contemporaries saw her, in the series of letters addressed to her from those committed to the religious life - abbots, abbesses, priests monks and nuns. While this may not represent real grass-roots opinion (there is a disproportionate number of letters from heads of houses) it does indicate something of the thinking of the rank-and-file. Of the hundred-odd letters written to Hildegard by her brothers and sisters in religion most convey some sort of request.[69]

Once again Hildegard's role in the minds of her correspondents is revealed by what they ask her, as much as by the formal descriptions in the salutatio or captatio. However, a small proportion (roughly one-tenth) make explicit mention of Hildegard's prophetic gifts, and we will examine these first. Several letters mention Hildegard's prophetic gifts only in passing. So Adam of Ebrach refers at the end of his letter to '...Spiritus sancti gratia, quae multa mirabilia

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69. This is to be expected given the selection process used by the compiler, who cast the correspondence in the form of letter pairs.

70. PL197.190D-191B.

Spiritu prophetico in vobis operatur...'.[70] And Ludwig of St Eucharius, describing her 'ingenii excellentia', writes 'ut solum philosophorum et dialectorum, verum etiam antiquorum prophetarum exsuperes acumina'.[71] A more oblique reference to her gifts is made by the Abbess of Koufungim, who writes: 'Celebre factum est in ore, omnium volumen volans, quod prophetae datum est in escam, in tuo quoque ore, utpote sapiens, requiescere'.[72] In an even more allusive vein, a monk of Maulbronn sees Hildegard as 'Hac virtutum varietate circumamicta a dextris summi Regis assistis, velut illa prophetica regina, ubi inaestimabilem sapientiae thesaurum invenisti'.[73] More specifically, Abbot Werner of Kircheim notes that her reputation depends, 'non solum operari bona, verum etiam prophetare futura', an indication that even in Hildegard's lifetime this aspect of her gift was of particular interest to some people.[74]

Several letters contain more extensive references to prophecy. The Abbot of Elevac praises God

> qui vos et puriorius vitae sanctitate pollere fecit, ac spiritu prophetiae supra humanam opinionem vobis indidit praesentia tangere, revolvere praeterita, futura praevidere...'[75]

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71. Ludwig, it will be recalled was a close friend of Hildegard, a visitor to the Rupertsberg and commissioner of Theodoric's part of the <u>Vita</u>. PL197.287D-288B.

72. PL197.324C-D. The allusion is possibly to Apoc. 10:8-10.

73. PL197.357D-358B. This may be a reminiscence of Ps. 44:10 :' Astitit regina a dextris tuis in vestitu deaurato, circumdata varietate.'

74. PL197.268D-269B. This letter apparently dates from shortly after Hildegard's tour of Swabia, when she visited Kircheim.

75. PL197.281B-282B.

Similar sentiments are expressed by one T, a priest and Benedictine monk, who maintains: 'Credo enim per Spiritum, per quem cuncta praeterita, praesentia et futura perspicis, etiam tibi patere secreta mei cordis.'[76]

Further letters make special reference to the fact that Hildegard, qua woman, has been given such a grace. L, Abbess of Bamberg, rejoices 'quod Dominus, qui vos praescivit et sibi praeelegit, nostris temporibus spiritu prophetiae illustravit ac replevit.'[77] She goes on to say that she is especially gratified 'quod non solum ad hoc vos ex femineo sexu praevidit et praedesitinavit, verum multos gratia sua per doctrinam illuminavit'.

These various lines of thought converge in a letter whose writer identifies himself only as 'pauperis praelati habens officium'[78] The writer begins his letter by suggesting that Hildegard's special relationship with God is the result of her 'fidem non fictam' and the consecration to him of her 'integritatem pueritiae'. He who makes known his hidden secrets through Hildegard, has also judged her worthy to give ear to those who question her in God's name. That such a gift has been given to a woman does not perturb the writer since 'Deus...sicut per viros prophetantes, sic et per sanctas feminas secreta divinitas suae pandere aliquando voluit et potuit'. He cites the witness of Joel 2:28 and adds that Deborah, Olda, Anna the mother of Samuel, Elisabeth the mother of John the Baptist, and other women

76. PL197. 344D-345C. The reply in Z is addressed to 'Godefrido sacerdoti et monacho'.

77. PL197.330C-D

78. PL197.297A-D.

devoted to God 'spiritum prophetiae habuisse, et tamen conjugatas fuisse'. Hildegard, he maintains, comes to prophecy from a position of spiritual superiority, 'omnino carnis fragilitate expertem, a puerilibus annis pudicitiam Deo serventem'.[79] In spite of the glowing terms in which Hildegard's prophetic powers are described, the writer does not ask a question about future events or the ultimate destination of his soul. In fact, all he requires of Hildegard is 'verba consolationis per scripta vestra', of the kind that she has often given him 'viva voce', so that he may refresh his memory by reading them.

As this last example indicates, the degree of emphasis given to Hildegard's prophetic powers bears no apparent relationship to the nature of the favour asked. So the monk and priest, 'T', who describes Hildegard's gift in terms reminiscent of the Glossa Ordinaria definition asks 'ut pro delictis meis apud deum intervenias, et sanctis tuis precibus vitam meam subleves, et negligentias meas admonere digneris per litteras tuae correptionis'.[80] Of course it should not be thought that such admonitory letters were totally divorced from Hildegard's prophetic activities. As we shall see, most were cast in prophetic form, delivered as if from the Holy Spirit, and some contained quite extensive visions in their own right. This is what 'T' seems to have had in mind when he wrote, 'nimis jucundum mihi esset, atque optabile, si vel tuas excellentissimas visiones, vel aliquas tuae beatitudines litteras mererer percipere'. The connection

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79. For a discussion of such ideas see J.Bugge, Virginitas (The Hague, 1975) esp. 29ff.

80. PL197.344D-345C.

between Hildegard's admonition and its divine source is clearly assumed by the monk of Maulbronn when he writes: 'Rogo etiam, salva gratia tua, soror et domina, ut aliquid de coelesti admonitione mihi transmittas, ut per hoc tuae sanctitatis memoriam cordis meis oculis anteponas'.[81]

The Abbess of Bamberg also seeks to be strengthened 'commonitoriis litteris' and hopes that her convent might join Hildegard's in a fraternity of prayer - 'consortium fraternitatis vestrae dignemini recipere'.[82] Such a request bears no logical relationship to Hildegard's prophetic powers apart from an understandable desire to associate oneself with a proven source of spiritual strength.

The Abbess of Koufungim adopts a slightly more acerbic tone towards Hildegard than some of the correspondents considered above.[83] She suggests that the possession of prophetic gifts carries with it a duty to reform the failings of the Church, which she expresses in the following way: 'Discurre autem, excita Ecclesiam, imo principes Ecclesiae...'. In keeping with this rather more self-confident attitude she seeks 'litteras tuas consolatorias', rather than ones of admonition.

The rest of the letters which contain explicit prophetic descriptions are concerned with more specific problems. So Adam of Ebrach explains that he is 'in turbine...pro sollicitudine fratrum

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81. PL197.357D-358B.

82. PL197.330C-D

83. PL197.324C-D.

84. PL197.190D-191B.

nostrorum'.[84] He asks for the guidance of the Holy Spirit and 'nos vestris consolari'. Werner of Kircheim asks for a copy of the sermon Hildegard preached 'nobis et aliis quamplurimus in Kycheim praesentibus, de neglegentia sacerdotum...'.[85] In two of the letters the nature of the problems cannot now be discovered, because of the practice of entrusting confidential messages to the bearer of a letter for oral delivery.[86] So Ludwig of St Eucharius concludes his letter by remarking 'Litteras a te promissas cum magno desiderio exspecto...' and adding that she should include in the letter 'quod tibi visum fuerit de negotio tibi commisso'.[87] Since the business is not mentioned in the letter, we may assume that it had been told to her by its bearer. This is clearly the case in the final letter of the group under consideration, that of the Abbot of Elevac.[88] Indeed this letter comes close to treating Hildegard as a prophet in the narrow sense of the term. Here she is asked to consult 'divinum oraculum' about the Abbot's troubles, described in the following menacing terms: 'A dextris fraudulentis amicus insidiatur, a sinistris truculentis inimicus oppugnat', and 'aliis super quibus maturitatem vestram nuntii nostri consulerint'. Yet the kind of answer expected from the divine oracle is left vague. The abbot merely requires her to send him 'quidquid nobis de misericordia dei, exspectandum sit'.

Since the group of letters which mention Hildegard's powers specifically contains a range of requests - some obviously linked to

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85. PL197.268D-269B.

86. See Constable, Peter the Venerable, 17f.

87. PL197.287D-288B.

88. PL197.281B-282B

her gift and some merely dependent on a recognition of the holiness of her life - it is not surprising to find the pattern repeated in the rest of Hildegard's correspondence with members of the religious orders. In these letters the powers attributed to Hildegard must often be inferred from the nature of the questions she is asked. Cases where Hildegard is asked to consult the will of God in a particular situation make up a large proportion of them. Many of these come from the heads of convents seeking to lay aside their office, whose burdens are felt to be too heavy.[89]

Although such a decision might have practical consequences concerning the administration of the monastery, and an ethical dimension, concerned with the duty of the abbot or abbess to those who elected him or her, Hildegard's correspondents viewed the problem in terms of its effect on their own ultimate salvation. The question they ask is whether the action accords with the will of God. So we find the Abbot of St Anistasius requesting

> ...ut Spiritus qui revelat arcana et occulta sapientia suae, indicet tibi, quid mihi expediat in portando obedientiae Christi onere scilicet perseverare, an quiescere, ut vacem ipsius contemplationi.[90]

The Abbot of Kaisheim begs Hildegard in similar terms to ask 'ipsum Sponsum, qui requiescit in cubiculo cordis tui...utrum mihi utilius sit onus pastoralis curae deponere an diutius ferre...'[91] The same

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89. Even if the problems faced by Abelard at St Rochais were atypical, simply running an organisation such as a monastery demanded skills not possessed by everyone.

90. PL197.196A-C: my emphasis.

91. PL197.197A-C. Hildegard's reply to this letter in R is a composite of two other letters, both to Conrad of Kaisheim. See Echtheit, 165 n39.

point is made by the Abbot of St Maria in the following way:

> ...studeatis a domino, ut intra caetera revelationum charismata nostrae conditionem humilitatis vobis insinuare dignetur, videlicet utrum in hoc officio honoris et oneris, praelationsi et periculi, animae salutem mereri me providerit, vel ad hoc absolvi, utile mihi fore prospexerit...[92]

Although the Abbot of Rettinhasilis was doubly burdened, having lately been elected as Abbot of Salem, he posed the question in similar terms, with the emphasis apparently on his own salvation, rather than that of his charges. He writes: 'quaeso, sancti Spiritus voluntatem simpliciter quaerenti mihi simpliciter de hac re insinues, scilicet ut si cautius et salubrius est hoc onus abjicere, digneris mihi dicere...'.[93] The Abbot of Zwettl is more succinct; having outlined his problem he asks only, 'quidquid placuerit Spiritui sancto mihi rescribere dignemini'.[94] So too, Richard of Springiersbach asks: 'litteris ergo sigillatis more clausis, hujus rei tenorem me...causa dei quantocius rescire facite...'[95]

Among the letters from abbots only one shows any apparent concern for the monks who are his care and his burden. The Abbot of Vessra writes that he has decided to resign his office because '...longe

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92. PL197.201D-202C. The answer to this letter in R is directed to the Abbot of Roth Otene in Z and Utteldoini of Aselfesroth in M. See Echtheit, 165 n47.

93. PL197.285C-286A.

94. PL197.290A-B

95. PL197.296B-D. Hldegard's reply in R combines a letter to Berthold of St Eucharius and a monk of Disibodenberg. See Echtheit, 165, n. 32.

96. PL197.330A-C. In Z, the reply is to Provost Andreas of Averbode. See Echtheit, 165, n45.

fatigatio pene omnem scientiae intellectum mihi subduxit'[96] As a result he fears 'Domini gregem propter meam negligentiam contigat periclitari.' In short, they will be better served by another abbot. He writes to Hildegard hoping that she will confirm that his decision is in accordance with the will of God: 'ut dubiam mentem consilio vestro confirmetis, et quae sit voluntas Domini super hac re mihi scriptis vestris remandate.' Finally, among the men who seek Hildegard's advice in this matter we come to N, a priest and 'magister pauperum in Lutherum, scilicet in domo hospitali'.[97] He finds his work in the world a burden, and would like to seek the comparative peace of a monastery. He sums up his dilemma in the following sentence: 'Nam nobis injunctum est ut pauperibus serviamus, quod sine gravitudine tumultuantis animi implere non possumus'. He asks Hildegard to tell him 'utrum nobis utilius sit' to persevere or retire to the cloister. His final words express the underlying wish of all such petitioners: 'Deus vobis aperiat quod sibi in hoc melius placeat.'

The letters to Hildegard from women in the same situation show comparable concerns. Hildegard's advice is sought because she has means of ascertaining the will of God. As the Abbess of Widergoldesdorf put it:

> ...superna Sapientia sedem suam in vobis paravit. Quapropter...obnixe supplicio ut dignemini a deo perquirerer vobis utrum sit ipsius voluntas ut istam sarcinam portem aut abjiciam...[98].

Although the Abbess of Ratisbon says: 'Scire cupio consilium vestrum

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97. PL197.363D-364B.

98. PL197.329A-C.

de cura mihi credita, quomodo vel quando expediri possim de illa', it is clear from the preceding sentences that she seeks Hildegard's counsel because she is divinely informed.[99] So too, Sophie of Kizzingen concludes a rather fulsome letter with the brief request: 'Sonet vox tua in auribus meis, et quid salubrius sit utrum onus quod porto deseram, an diutius feram, mihi petenti divinitus enarra'.[100] Although the situation of Sophie, Abbess of Altwick is slightly different from the majority of vacillators described above, since she has actually made up her mind 'onus regiminis, quod graviter porto, derelinquam', she seeks confirmation of the decison from God through Hildegard.[101] The reasons she gives for her request, however, serve as a summary for all the cases mentioned above:

> Ergo, quoniam scio vos apud Deum esse tanti meriti, quod ex Spiritus sancti revelatione cognoscere valeatis quid expediat homini facere, propterea humilibus precibus exoro pietatem vestram quatenus pro me Dominum velitis consulere si sibi placita sit conversatio mea...

Other letters from members of the clergy written to elicit information on particular subjects, provide further proof that the writers thought Hildegard could tap special sources of divine knowledge. We have already seen how Eberhard of Bamberg believed she could answer a difficult theological question. So too, Odo of Soissons asked for the authoritative view on the divinity/paternity issue which was to exercise the council of Paris in 1148 in connection

99. PL197.332A-C.

100. PL197.322C-323A. The reply in R is composite, part of which is addressed to Sophie.

101. PL197.321C-322A.

102. PL197.351D-352B. Odo of Soissons, later Bishop of Tusculum. He had heard of Hildegard at the Council of Trier. He had been entrusted with an investigation of the problem by Pope Eugenius. The matter was referred to the Council of Rheims, where Gilbert recanted. See N.Haring, 'The Case of Gilbert de la Porree, Bishop of Poitiers' MS 13 (1951) 1-44 and M. Chibnall, ed., John of Salisbury. Historia Pontificalis (Edinburgh, 1956) 15-41.

with Gilbert de la Porrée.[102] He gives as his reason for asking Hildegard the fact that: 'Dicitur quod elevata in coelestibus multa videas, et multa per scripturam proferas' and he makes clear in his concluding petition the source of her knowledge: 'quid inde in coelestibus sentias, nobis exponere et transmittere non differas...'.

Hildegard's correspondents also ask her questions about the sacraments, problems that had practical aspects as well as doctrinal interest.[103] Thus a priest writes to Hildegard: 'De corpore et sanguine Christi, in quibus tota spes fidelium est, etiam docete me...'.[104] He feels Hildegard can answer the question because 'dei gratia lux vestra coram hominibus salubriter lucet, Patrem vestrum qui vos ardentem lucernam ad illuminationem Ecclesiae supposuit...'. A similar question, but with the emphasis on those performing the mass, is the subject of a letter from Werner of Kaisheim, already mentioned.[105] Philip of Parc is concerned with the difficult problem of penance. He asks: '...quia senio confecta, et legibus poenitentiae multo jam tempore confracta est...quomodo scis, et animae suae utile prospexeris, unde revelatur, ei impendas'.[106] Philip 's reference to the woman Ida, whom Hildegard had apparently sent him as a penitent,

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103. That a priest should ask advice of a woman, ipso facto barred from the administration of the sacraments, is remarkable in itself.

104. PL197.212B-C

105. See above p.

106. Philip of Parc (Premonstratensian) PL197.276C-277B. The letter was written 1158-62.

reveals that his question was practical rather than academic.[107]

A quasi-sacramental question is raised by Abbot Gedolphus of Brauweiler who seeks Hildegard's advice in the exorcism of a possessed woman.[108] The abbot devotes the first half of the letter to praise of Hildegard, and includes the following passage: 'Nam in uobis fulget opus non humanum, sed diuinum, gratia praecedens, donum propellens, quod non dictat humana ratio, sed quod procedit ex fonte lucidissimo'. And the letter ends as follows:

> Quid ergo Deus de his uobis insinuauerit, seu uisione reuelauerit, nobis sanctitas uestra litteris designare studeat, obnixe et humiliter deprecamur.

In the second letter, after the failure of the first exorcism, the preliminaries have been cut down to a mere 'Quod Dominus uos respexit, gratiamque suam infudit, iam totus mundus nouit', before the abbot and monks relate their sorry tale.

While sacramental questions were of universal application, Hildegard was also asked to use her powers in matters of more local interest. So Cuno, Abbot of St Disibod, acknowledging that 'sanctitas vestra...plurima secreta spiritu videt', asks for whatever information 'de patrono beato Disibodo' God sees fit to reveal to her.[109] Hildegard answered the request with a version of her sequence 'O virum admirandum'.[110]

The problems of monastic organisation and pastoral care are the

107. See PL197.276C-277B.

108. The letters are preserved in the <u>Vita</u>, see Appendix, 38ff.

109. PL197.203A-B.

110. PL197.203C-204C.

subject of further letters to Hildegard. We have already seen that such problems appeared so intractable to some writers that their only response was to flee from them. On the other hand, B, a priest of Trier, is willing to persevere, given Hildegard's 'consolaria verba', which will tell him 'quomodo his praesse possim quos sub regimine sacerdotii regere debeo'.[111] Once again, her power to do this is described in the following way: 'quoniam supernae visioni frequenter innixa estis...'. In a more difficult situation, the prior and monks of Hirsau, at odds with their abbot, make the following request: 'Quapropter incerti quid agamus, ut vestris orationibus divina voluntas nobis aliquatenus super his elucescat, humillime imploramus.'[112]

The letter of Tengswich of Andernach can also be placed here, since it concerns monastic organisation, although not of her own monastery.[113] Tengswich, a canoness, questions the elitism of Hildegard's establishments, where only daughters of the nobility are accepted. She does, however, acknowledge that 'Multorum namque testimonio didicimus de secretis coelestibus plurima mortalibus intellectu difficila et rara, vobis divinitus ascribendum revelari...'

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111. PL197.350A-B. In Z and M the reply is addressed to the priest Conrad.

112. PL197.367C-368B.

113. PL197.336B-337B, and Hildegard's reply PL197.337B-338C. This is one of the few letter pairs found outside R, in Ms Z. For a discussion of the letter see Dronke, <u>WW</u>, 165ff., where he calls it 'both an (overly polite) enquiry and a challenge'. Although it is hard to gauge the extent of Tengswich's irony, the letter is evidence of Hildegard's general reputation, whether she thought it well-deserved or not.

On the broader questions of ecclesiastical organisation and politics few letters survive. The problem of the schism, which so exercised John of Salisbury, is infrequently mentioned. One letter which does touch on the schism is from Abbot H.[114] He asks in general terms 'ut quidquid Spiritu sancto edocta de hoc vel de meipso sentias, mihi rescribere velitis'. The final letter in this section introduces the next. Meffridus, prior of Eberbach has an inquiry 'de saecularibus et idiotis ad spiritalem conversationem conversis, quos nos conversos dicimus'.[115] Since he has heard that Hildegard has written something on the subject (Spiritu sancto vos scripsisse audivimus), he asks her to send him this particular work, which he refers to as 'litteras'.

Indeed, a large number of letters make reference to work Hildegard has already done on various subjects. Sometimes her correspondent asks for a written version of a sermon that he has heard her deliver in person. Thus Philip of Heinsberg, when deacon of Cologne asks 'ut ea quae viva voce nobis prius dixistis, litteris quoque commendetis, et nobis transmittatis'.[116] He has already made clear in an earlier part of the letter describing the occasion of her visit, that he believes the sermon was divinely inspired: 'cum per divinam jussionem ad nos venissetis, ubi verba vitae, prout Deus vobis inspiravit, nobis aperuistis'. Likewise, the Provost of St Peter and the clergy of Trier write:

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114. PL197.316A-C. It is possible that Hildegard discouraged such questions. See Pitra, 534: 'De schismate Ecclesiae non jubet me Dominus loqui, sed gladium suum vibrat, et arcum suum tendit..'.

115. PL197.259C-260A. For the problem of the conversi see J. Donnelly, The Decline of the Medieval Cistercian Laybrotherhood (New York, 1949).

116. PL197.243C-244A.

> Et quia Deus in vobis est, et verba ipsius ab ore vestro sonant, quam intime maternalem dilectionem vestram exoramus, ut ea quae viva voce nobis tunc propalastis, per presentem bajulum, scripta nobis transmittatis.[117].

The letter of Werner of Kircheim already mentioned, also fits here, since his request for writings on the negligence of priests refers to a written version of 'verba quae Spiritu sancto vos docente, nobis et aliis quamplurimus in Kyrcheim praesentibus...aperuistis'.[118]

Other writers make less specific requests, as for example, the Abbess of Gerbestethde, who asks simply 'ut aliquid mihi de libris vestris transmittatis, omni devotione semper deserviendum'.[119] So too, the priest, Berhtold of Reutlingen, writes at the conclusion of his letter: 'Praeterea librum tuum transcribere multum cupio.'[120] Acting on a similar impulse, the Abbess of Didenkirch reminds Hildegard that she has sent her some parchment, 'ut de mensa vestra, id est de visione illa qua multa mirabilia frequenter videtis, mihi valde desideranti de supradictis summatim apponatis'.[121] Still others complain that their letters have gone unanswered, or that there has been some delay in a promised message.[122] One such letter from the Abbot of Ilbenstadt reads in part: 'Multis vos saepe pulsavi litteris, multa vos praesentialiter petitione conveni, numquam a vobis, uti

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117. PL197.253B-D

118. PL197.268D-269B.

119. PL197.325B-C.

120. PL197.343A-C.

121. PL197.334D-335.

122. PL197.287D-288B; 301A-B; 320C-321A; 348A-D.

123. PL197.301A-B; the reply is addressed to Abbot Wolfard of Album.

promisistis, litteras extorquere potui'.[123] Two priests from Reutlinen had the same experience; having heard they would receive 'legationem consolatoriam...exspectantes exspectavimus et nondum intendisti'.[124]

Finally, we come to the large group of letters in which Hildegard's prophetic powers are most clearly implied. Almost one quarter of the letters ask either about the present state of the writer's soul (often in conjunction with the state of his monastery) or about its ultimate fate. Sometimes this is expressed in general terms, as by the Abbot of Kempten, who writes: 'et aliqua de statu nostro et ecclesiae nostrae, vobis divinitus revelata, intimare humillime deposcimus'.[125] So too, the monks of St Michael of Sigeburg, after taking Hildegard to task for not showing 'affectum matris in nobis' to which position they claim to have elected her, ask, '...ut aliqua de statu loci nostri in vera visione edocta nobis aperiatis...'[126] The Prior of Zwiefalten, wishing to repair the failure of discipline in his monastery asks Hildegard '...per Spiritus sancti revelationem aliqua nobis profutura denuntiare.'[127] And since Zwiefalten was a double monastery, we find the nuns writing on their own behalf to ask:

> cum divinae insisistis, commonitoria verba ad nos dirigatis, et quomodo a via negligentiae ad viam correctionis redire debeamus, nobis ostendere non negligatis.'[128]

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124. PL197.348A-D, identified as Conrad and Bertolf in M (Berlin, Pr. StB., Cod. Theol. Lat. f. 699).

125. PL197.206A-C.

126. PL197.366A-C.

127. PL197.370A-B.

128. PL197.371C-D.

So too, the Abbot of Rappenberh writes: 'Ad consulendum enim Spiritum Dei qui in vobis habitat, de praesenti statu ecclesiae nostrae eum ad vos direxi'.[129]

A more personal enquiry, no doubt influenced by his critical physical condition, is found in the letter of W, Abbot of Honingen, who asks 'si tam petere audeo, ut de futuro statu vitae meae me docetis'.[130] He affirms : 'haec omnia vobis possibilia esse per eum qui in vobis habitat'. A member of the cathedral clergy of Mainz is also concerned with his personal standing in the sight of God. He asks Hildegard '...quidquid tibi displicet in me, et quomodo depellere valeam a me, ipso Deo ac Domino nostro donante, tuis litteris insigillatis denuintiare mihi digneris...'.[131] Similarly, a canon of Utrecht wishes Hildegard to reveal 'quatenus arcana divinae revelationis de statu meo, praecipue secundum interiorem hominem...'.[132] The Abbot of Selboth is determined to leave nothing to chance when he writes:

> Sed nec de hoc ambigo quin omnem statum meum, et omnia quae circa me aguntur, praeterita, praesentia et futura, per praesentes litteras, ipso (Spirito sancto) revelante cognoscas.[133]

Prophecy in the narrow sense is the subject of the letter of the Abbot

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129. PL197.307A-C. The use of the possessive here suggests that he is referring to his monastery, rather than the church as a whole.

130. PL197.298D-299C.

131. PL197.311D-312B. The reply in R is combined from two letters, one of which is addressed to a canon of Maastricht in W.

132. PL197.361D-362A.

133. PL197.301C-302B. The reply in Z is addressed to Abbot Odo; in W to Provisor N in Selboth.

of Coblenz, who remarks '...cuncta jam sunt impleta quae mihi praedixisti'.[134] He asks further: 'si quid de me vides, et maxime si a benigno Jesu aliquam spem in futura vita audeam sperare, o dilectissima et amantissima, transcribas.' This letter is unusual because it lacks the expected praise of Hildegard's spiritual gifts and their author, going straight to the point of the enquiry. The Abbot of Utrecht, on the other hand, while asking an even more direct question: 'si tandem in coetu salvandorum me divinitas praeordinavit computari', gives the theological explanation for her power.[135] Because she is illuminated by the light of divine splendour 'nonnunquam quarumlibet causarum eventus, et rerum exitus occulta dispensatione Dei praefinitos, per inhabitantem in te ejus gratiam tibi concedatur contemplari...'.

It is clear, then, that Hildegard was consulted by members of the monastic orders and secular clergy on subjects ranging from theological questions to matters of personal salvation, as well as problems of monastic discipline and church organisation. Turning to the letters Hildegard received from the laity, we might expect the range to be somewhat narrower, concentrating on the personal, rather than the universal or ecclesiastical.[136] It is, however, impossible to say whether this is the case with the letter of Frederick Barbarossa where the subject of 'ea quae praedixi nobis, cum Ingelheim manentes, ad praesentiam nostram venire rogamus' and which 'jam in

134. PL197.309B-C.

135. PL197.346D-347C. The reply in Z is to Magister H of Utrecht.

136. Few letters from laypeople appear in R, but Hildegard wrote more than we have requests for. See her letters in Pitra and Ms B.

manibus tenemus' is not further identified.[137] Of a more personal nature is the letter of Philip of Flanders, which he wrote to Hildegard when considering a journey to the Holy Land.[138] He asks Hildegard whether 'utile mihi erit' to remain there or to return home. In words reminiscent of the monkish writers he seeks 'quod de statu meo, forsitan audistis, et divina revelatione cognovistis aut cognitura estis.'

Thus the evidence from Hildegard's contemporaries is overwhelming. In letter after letter, she is asked to exercise her prophetic powers in order to provide knowledge of God's intentions, purposes, thoughts and actions. Sometimes this is referred to explicitly as acting 'in spiritu prophetico', but more often she is seen as illuminated by, taught by, or informed by the Holy Spirit, or more simply God. Although many of the letters cannot be closely dated, the recognition of her gifts appears to stretch from the earliest letters, around the time of the Council of Trier, until the end of her life. Moreover, it is held by a cross-section of the church hierarchy, and extends to laypeople as well. Nor is there any obvious correlation between the status of the questioner and the type of question asked. The unanimity with which her correspondents describe Hildegard as the bearer of prophetic gifts is matched by the single-minded way in which she portrays herself. From the moment that she put her hand to the writing of the Scivias her life was set in the prophetic mould. Her consciousness of this found expression in her letters, as well as her longer writings. Hildegard did not see herself bound by the worldly

137. See Echtheit, 127-8, and arguments for the authenticity of the letter.

138. PL197.187C-188A.

constraints of the ars dictaminis. Although she prefaces some of her letters with a vocative phrase, more often she goes directly to the point by declaring the source of her information.[139]

The apparently bewildering variety of formulae used by Hildegard in her letters to indicate the fount of her wisdom, covers certain distinguishable semantic fields. Most commonly these concern experiences of light and vision. The basic type is represented by 'in vera visione haec vidi et audivi'.[140] The adverbial phrase may be qualified by such additions as 'mysteriorum Dei', 'anima meae', or varied as in 'in mystica visione' or 'in mystica et vera...', 'in umbra visione' or 'in serena luce', 'in sereno/vero lumine'.[141] A second type involves the ascription of direct speech, or sometimes instruction to Hildegard, to a figure representing the Deity. The usual form is 'X dicit', or 'X me docuit haec verba'. The simplest case is one where 'X' is a single word or concept such as 'Sapientia', or 'Spiritus', or sometimes 'spiritus veritatis'.[142] This usage shades into a descriptive phrase, often utilising concepts of light. For example: lux vivens/lux acuta/serena lux, vera lux/secreta

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139. Most common vocative phrases are: 'O serve dei' or 'O fili/filia dei'; others include, 'O tu persona deo sumpta et vocata es' (PL197.174C); 'O turbae hominum' (Pitra, 341); 'O Sybilla' (Pitra, 521); 'O pater' (Pitra, 546) 'O laudabilis persona' (Haug, 60); 'O felix anima (Ms B, f.39r); 'O miles Christi/huius saeculi' (Pitra, 547 and 563).

140. 'in vera visione' : PL197.164A, 218B, 331D, 339B, 361B, 363A, 364B, 374B; Ms B f.25r, 33r, 33v, 41v; Pitra, 528, 532, 534.

141. PL197.322A; Ms B f.28v; Haug, 65; Pitra, 527, 348; Pitra, 550, 553.

142. Pitra, 536, 549, 562, 563, 573; PL197.166B, 167A; PL197.350A.

143. PL197.197c, 368B; PL197.291D, 300D, 174A.

lux/justissima lux.[143] Variants using 'lumen' are 'lumen in lumine', 'lumen in vera visione'.[144] A similar idea is expressed by 'lumen visitationis' and the unusual variant 'vivens oculus'.[145] Slightly less frequent is the use of 'fons', especially 'fons vivus', with such variants as 'perspicuus fons' and 'fons aquarum'.[146] It is perhaps surprising that Hildegard does not more often describe her information as coming from a voice. We do find, on occasion, 'vox viventium alarum', 'vox vitae et salutis', 'superna vox' and the 'vox de coelo' familiar from the Scivias and the LDO.[147]

More frequent is the use of the formula 'X dicit', where X is a relative clause. The simplest form is 'Qui est'.[148] A variant version, 'qui vita est', is also found, while an extended form, 'qui erat, et qui est et qui venturus', is also used.[149] A second relative formula is represented by 'quem nihil latet'.[150] The two are sometimes combined in the form 'qui est et quem nihil latet'.[151] The idea of omniscience is also common in this formula. Thus we find, 'qui omnia novit', 'qui decreta novit', and 'qui omnia videt'.[152]

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144. Pitra, 539, 563.

145. Pitra, 536; Haug, 62.

146. cf. Ms. B, f.35v: 'Igneus autem spiritus dei qui vivus fons est'. Pitra, 520, PL197.337B; PL197.156D; Pitra, 520.

147. Pitra, 337; PL197.177D; PL197.372D; PL197.260B.

148. Cf. Exodus 3:13. Pitra, 561; PL197.287A and 191B.

149. PL197.344C; cf. Rev. 1:8, PL197.244A.

150. Haug, 67.

151. PL197.168B.

152. PL197.162C; Pitra, 529; PL197.371D.

Extended forms are also found as 'qui videt nec vicissitudine mutatur'.[153] In several letters the idea of God's bountifulness is expressed in such clauses as,'qui vitam dat viventibus/omnibus', 'qui dat dona dantibus et cursum currentibus' and 'qui bonum et suavem tum infundit hominibus'.[154] Less frequently found descriptions are:'qui non silet' and 'qui ...te... excribrat'.[155]

While Hildegard apparently chose such formulae to make clear the source of her advice and admonitions in the majority of cases, she sometimes employed more elaborate apologetics. In such contexts she is likely to invoke the idea that she is 'indocta' and 'paupercula forma'.[156]

Hildegard uses the extended apologetics in three main ways. The first can be compared to the introductions of her full-length visionary works, and occurs in letters only because some of her works are incidentally cast in this form.[157] The same reason could be advanced for the sermons in written form sent to the clergy of Trier

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153. PL197.282B.

154. PL197.154 and 185C; Pitra, 541; PL197.303C.

155. PL197.305A; Ms B, f.28r.

156. The possibility that this is a simple modesty topos is perhaps suggested by her use of the formulae when writing to her superiors - the popes, clergy of Mainz and abbots of Disibodenberg. However she also uses it to close friends, such as Philipp of Cologne, and Abbot Ludwig of St Eucharius. The formula is not only used where intellectual ability or special knowledge is in question. In Ms B f.41v, Hildegard writes ...'que me pauperculam formam in amore dei matrem nominas...' and in Ms B, f.53r where she rejoices that '... nos pauperculae' are included in a prayer confraternity.

157. e.g. the lives of St Rupert and St Disibod, Pitra, 352ff. and 358ff.

158. PL197.244ff. and 254ff.

and Cologne.[158] Their more extended form required a fuller introduction than the simple formulae she used for her short letters of admonition or consolation. So too, extended apologetics introduce the letters that report visions of some length, even when they did not originate in a sermon.[159] Apart from the influence of the particular visionary form of the letter, the content also dictates Hildegard's choice of apologetic form in other ways. So it is not surprising to find Hildegard insisting on the divine source of her information when putting her side in the dispute with the clergy of Mainz. Her letter begins: 'In visione que anime mee ante quam nata procederem a deo opifice infixa est coacta sum ad scribendum ista pro ligatura qua a magistris alligate sumus...'.[160] A third class of letters which consistently evokes an apologetic response from Hildegard consists of those where she is asked to answer a particular theological question. We find her writing in her answer to Eberhard of Bamberg :

> Nunc O pater, ego paupercula ad verum lumen prospexi et secundum quod ibi in vera visione vidi et audivi, quod tibi exponi petisti, ita expositum, non verbis meis, sed veri luminis, cui nunquam ullus defectus est, in hunc modum transmitto.[161]

So too, in her letter to Odo of Soissons she says:

> Sic ego non sum imbuta humana doctrina, nec potentius viribus, nec etiam aestuo in sanitatis corporis...consisto...Et me pusillam rogavit, ut se hoc ad verum lumen diligentius aspicerem. Et vidi et didici in verum lumen videndo, et non per me in me requirendo...'.[162]

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159. See e.g. PL197.260ff. and 272ff.

160. Ms B, f.54r.

161. PL197.168B-171D.

162. Haug, 68.

We find an abbreviated apology in her reply to Philipp of Parc on the sacrament of penance:'...laudabile est in te, quod propter amorem Dei me debilem et indoctam femineam formam videre et audire dignatus es'.[163]

An examination of the way in which Hildegard's contemporaries perceived her suggests the following conclusion. Although she was consulted on a great variety of questions, the underlying assumption was, in every case, that she could ascertain the 'secreta Dei', a concept sufficiently broad to include general questions of theology, soteriology, eschatology and more particular enquiries about individuals in the world and beyond it. Her willingness to speak on such matters, publicly as well as privately, shows that she was acting in accordance with the prophetic tradition of the Old and New Testaments. While her prophetic role is sometimes mentioned explicitly by her correspondents, others, by the nature of their requests, assume it. Hildegard, too, while adopting the stance of a prophet in her language and the assumption of charismatic gifts, represents herself merely as the instrument of the Lord, without calling herself a prophet. The closest she came to doing so was in the autobiographical fragment of the Vita when she said:

> Hec ad audienciam moguntine ecclesie allata cum essent et discussa, omnes ex deo esse dixerunt et ex prophecia quam olim prophete prophetauerant.[164]

Subsequently Hildegard seems to have been as happy to fulfil this role as her contemporaries were ready to grant it to her. Its discovery,

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163. PL197.277B-278A.

164. Appendix, 14.

whether by accident or design, allowed Hildegard to exercise her talents and lay claim to a degree of knowledge and authority which would otherwise have been denied her because she was a woman, as will be explained in the following chapter.

# CHAPTER FOUR: KNOWLEDGE AND AUTHORITY

Sunt et viri naturaliter tam mente quam corpore feminis fortiores.

Abelard to Heloise, Letter VI

I suggested in the last chapter that Hildegard's adoption of the role of prophet enabled her to start putting her visions down in writing. The task of this chapter is to explain both why this was necessary and how it achieved her ends. Other writers of the time managed to produce works without resorting to such large claims. How did Hildegard's case differ from theirs? The answers to these questions will be found, I suggest, by considering i) the nature of medieval Christian epistemology; ii) the institutional structures which arose from and reflected such theories; and iii) Hildegard's particular relationship to i) and ii) as a 'paupercula forma'.

As a way into the problem we may start with the following comparison. At about the same time as Hildegard's uncompleted Scivias received approval from Pope Eugenius, another writer of very different background also presented his work to the incumbent of the See of St Peter. The writer was Bernard Silvestris and the work, his Cosmographia.[1] Whereas Hildegard had received a minimal education at the hands of 'indocta mulier', Bernard was a pupil of the great

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1. A gloss in Ms Bodl. Laud Misc. 515, f.188v on Cosmographia i.3, contains a flattering allusion to Eugenius, 'in whose presence this work was recited in Gaul and gained his favour': cited W. Wetherbee, The Cosmographia of Bernardus Silvestris (New York, 1973) 135.

Thierry of Chartres, and was described by Matthew of Vendome as 'the glory of Tours, the gem of scholarship, the pride of the schools'.[2]

That works from authors of such contrasting educational backgrounds were found equally acceptable by the Holy See might at first be taken to indicate a cavalier attitude to learning on its part, at least as a prerequisite for authorship. However, Hildegard claimed to be untaught by human agencies, not that she was ignorant about the subjects of her writings. The manner in which she acquired her learning was at issue, not her possession of it.

i. Medieval Christian Epistemology

Because of the strong neo-platonic element in early Christian epistemology, there was a constant strand of what might be termed anti-intellectualism in medieval Christian thought.[3] Two consequences follow from the Christian adoption of neo-platonic ideas. First, that the knowledge of God is the true end of all study, and second, that the way to such knowledge is by abstracting one's thought from all that is transitory and mutable until the ultimate reality is attained.[4] In a more general sense, God was thought of as both the agent and guarantor of all knowledge. In principle, knowledge could

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2. Wetherbee, op. cit., 20: 'Me docuit dictare decus Turonense: magister silvestris, studii gemma, scolaris honor'; Curtius, op. cit., 111.

3. Although much of the neo-platonic influence can be attributed to St Augustine, he himself was not an enemy of intellectual effort, as we shall see. More generally on this see: E. Gilson, Reason and Revelation in the Middle Ages (New York, 1938) and the essays in H. Blumenthal and R. Markus, Neoplatonism and Early Christian Thought (London, 1981).

4. Cf. Plotinus' account of 'the One' in E. O'Brien, ed. The Essential Plotinus (New York, 1964).

thus result from the direct action of God on the soul, without further mediation. In practice, however, it was assumed that some effort was usually necessary on the part of the inquirer, in which case God's contribution was often explained by the analogy with light. As physical objects are best seen in the presence of the sun's light, so the sun of the world provides light for the soul to 'see' non-physical entities. Often the light, 'the inner teacher', is thought of as somehow resident in the soul, thus reinforcing the idea of introspection as the way to knowledge.[5]

A counterbalance to the predominantly introspective model of gaining knowledge of God was provided by the fact that Christianity was, as Curtius puts it, 'a religion of the Holy Book', and so knowledge of God could also be obtained by a proper reading of his word as recorded in the Bible.[6] Consequently various ancillary studies were legitimised for the Christian seeker of truth.

It was on this assumption that Augustine undertook to explain the kinds of study which were necessary or useful for a true understanding of the Scriptures, in his book De Doctrina Christiana.[7] He suggests that those intending to study the Bible should come prepared with a knowledge of Greek and Hebrew, familiarity with Latin being assumed in

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5. Augustine, especially in his earlier treatises such as 'De quantitate animae' and 'De magistro', presents a theory of learning very similar to Plato's 'knowledge as reminiscence'. However, because he has to deny the pre-existence of the soul he posits 'the interior teacher' which is identified with 'the inner light' and is the means by which the truth of propositions is recognised. See especially 'De magistro' c.12.

6. Curtius, op. cit., 310.

7. Saint Augustine. On Christian Doctrine, tr. D. W. Robertson jr. (Indianapolis, 1958) esp. Bk2, c.2.

his readers. As well as these linguistic skills, a knowledge of tropes or figures of speech and the rules of inference are useful, 'provided that men do not make the mistake of thinking that they have learned the truth of the blessed life when they have learned them'.[8] Because of the figurative or metaphorical nature of much biblical expression, some understanding of natural science, conceived as the natures of animals, stones and plants, is encouraged, as is an acquaintance with mathematics and music.[9] A knowledge of history helps in the understanding of the sacred books, 'even if we learn it outside the church as part of our childhood education'.[10] Finally, for those who intend to teach others on the basis of their understanding, a knowledge of rhetoric is essential.[11] Thus Augustine found a place in his scheme of Christian education for almost all the subjects to be classified in the Middle Ages as the seven liberal arts, with the possible exception of astronomy.[12]

Indeed it was on the basis of Augustine's work that Cassiodorus outlined his plan for a Christian education which gave equal weight to theological studies and the seven liberal arts.[13] That the plan remained unrealised for several centuries is understandable when we

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8. ibid., Bk2, c.27.

9. ibid., Bk2, c.16.

10. ibid., Bk2, c.28.

11. ibid., Bk4 passim.

12. Bk2, c.29: 'Knowledge of this kind in itself, although it is not allied with any superstition, is of very little use in the treatment of the Divine Scriptures and even impedes it through fruitless study...': 66.

13. Cassiodorus (c.485-580), Institutiones Divinarum et Saecularium Litterarum.

recall that the knowledge of Latin, which earlier writers took for granted, had to be painfully won back for the barbarian converts, and that Anglo-Saxon missionaries on the Continent went armed with a Bible and a Latin grammar.[14] Finally, because of the generous interpretation of the meaning of 'grammar', the study of classical and later literature became an integral part of the Christian education.[15]

To trace the vicissitudes of Christian learning in Western Europe from its beginnings to the twelfth century is beyond the scope of this thesis.[16] What is important for the purposes of this argument is to recognise that although the end and goal of all study was thought to be theology, or the knowledge of God, there were two rather different approaches to it. One was the interior or contemplative way which led to an experience of God, while the other was the active pursuit of knowledge, often followed as a hierarchical series of studies, the basis of which was the study of grammar, broadly conceived.[17] A second important point is that although voices had long been raised

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14. For St Boniface's grammar see W. Levison, England and the Continent in the Eighth Century (Oxford, 1946); LLDG, 48-50.

15. So Isidore of Seville: 'grammar, as its name indicates, is the study of letters (litterae) and that is why in Latin it is called literature (litteratura). Everything which does not deserve to pass into oblivion and has been entrusted to writing, belongs necessarily to the province of grammar': quoted LLDG, 59.

16. See for example, P. Riché, Education and Culture in the Barbarian West (Columbia, S.C., 1976); Levison, op. cit.; M. Laistner, Thought and Letters in Western Europe AD 500-900 (London, 1957); S. Wemple, Women in Frankish Society (Pennsylvania, 1981); LLDG; Smalley, Study of the Bible; G. Paré et al., La renaissance du deuxieme siecle (Paris-Ottowa, 1933); P. Delhaye, 'L'Organisation scolaire au XIIe siècle' Traditio 5 (1947) 211-268; H. Grundmann, 'Litteratus-Illitteratus' Archiv fur Kulturgeschichte 40 (1958) 1-65.

17. The opposing tendencies were summed up in the person of St Benedict, 'scienter nescius et sapienter indoctus' who abandoned his studies to become a monk, and yet by his incorporation of reading and study into the Rule, ensured a continuation of Christian scholarship.

against the danger of indulging in such studies for their own sakes, especially in the seductive pleasures of secular literature, the twelfth century saw an increasing polarisation of the two ways of knowledge.[18] The mystical and anti-intellectual trend was being championed by such monks as St Bernard, in opposition to the the upholders of the tradition of Christian scholarship, who were increasingly to be found in the schools.

The opposition between the two ways was no mere epistemological debate. St Bernard's opposition to the schools involved a radical critique. What he advocated was nothing short of 'conversio', a complete acceptance of the monastic (specifically Cistercian) way of life. The opposing values of the schools and the cloister are described in a series of sweeping contrasts in his sermon to students.[19] Little attention is paid to details of epistemology or course content. The choice is much starker:

> Fugite de medio Babylonis, fugite, et salvate animas vestras. Convolate ad urbes refugii, ubi possitis et de praeteritis agere poenitentiam, et in praesenti obtinere gratiam, et futuram gloriam fiducialiter praestolari.[20]

After a description of the monastery as a foretaste of Paradise, Bernard introduces another series of contrasts:'Non illud eruditio, sed unctio docet; nec scientia, sed conscientia comprehendit...'[21]

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18. To the well known examples of Jerome, Alcuin and Peter Damien we might add the lesser known letter of Elias, Abbot of St Martin in Cologne to ?John, master of schools in Trier: see H. Rochais, 'Ipsa Philosophia Christus', MS 13 (1951) 244-7.

19. PL182.833.

20. PL182.855.

21. PL182.848.

The Pauline notion of the weak confounding the strong is given an epistemological slant:

> in hujus ergo ostio paradisi divini susuri vox auditur, sacratissimum secretissimumque consilium, quod absconditum est a sapientibus et prudentibus, parvulis revelatur.[22]

Such attitudes were not confined to the newer orders, as is shown by the letter of Peter of Celle to John of Salisbury, where he praises the cloister in the following words:

> O beata schola, ubi Christus docet corda nostra verbo virtutus suae, ubi sine studio et lectione apprehendimus quomodo debeamus aeternitaliter beate vivere! Non emitur ibi liber, non redimitur magister scriptorum, nulla circumventio disputationum, nulla sophismatum intricatio, plana omnium quaestionum determinatio, plana universarum rationum et argumentionum apprehensio.[23]

Such writings did not mean that monks had ceded all claims to intellectual activity. The nature and range of St Bernard's own writings is sufficient to refute such an assumption. Moreover, Bernard was always ready to take up members of the schools on points of doctrine, as the examples of Abelard and Gilbert de la Porrée indicate. Whether the schoolmen were prepared to acknowledge his authority in intellectual matters was another matter. Gilbert de la Porrée, although condemned by the Council of Paris largely at Bernard's instigation, was said to have declined to discuss certain passages in St Hilary of Poitiers with him, considering Bernard insufficiently educated.[24]

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22. ibid.

23. Quoted M-D Chenu, Nature, Man and Society in the Twelfth Century trans. J. Taylor and L. Little (Chicago, 1968) 305.

24. 'in disciplinis liberalibus'. See N. Haring, op. cit., 3.

Criticism of the life and ambitions of students was not all from the cloister. The remarks of John of Salisbury in his Metalogicon about the aridity of the schools of Paris are well known. Less familiar are the words of Alan of Lille in his sermon, 'De clericis ad theologiam non accedentibus'.[25] The purpose of this brief sermon is apparently to point out that the true end of learning is theology, and to encourage its study in the schools. He writes:

> Deus loquitur, ad nos, miseros clericos, loquitur, de nostris inanibus et frivolis studiis loquitur, qui theologiam relinquimus, et (ad) inanes et transitoria scientias currimus, qui contempnimus celestem scientiam et currimus ad inanem philosophiam, immo, quod pessimum est, desirimus celestem patriam, et currimus ad negotiem terrenam.[26]

The kinds of studies considered frivolous by Alan are those that lead to worldly success, 'quia aut intendiunt emungere pecuniam, ut legiste et phisici, aut consequi vanam gloriam, ut grammatici et diale(c)tici'.[27] He goes on to say that the arts and natural sciences should not be condemned since they are 'pedissecas theologie, ancillas celestis philosophie'.[28] The rest of the sermon is an elaboration of the theme of the spoliation of the Egyptians (Exod. 12:35-6), which Augustine also used in the De Doctrina Christiana to justify secular studies as an aid to theology.

For a full working out of this idea, however, we must turn to Alan's epic poem Anticlaudianus, written about five years after Hildegard's

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25. M-T d'Alverny Alain de Lille. Textes Inédites (Paris, 1965) 274-278.

26. ibid., 274.

27. ibid.

28. ibid.

death. According to the Preface, the poem can be interpreted on three levels: '...litteralis sensus suavitas puerilem demulcebit auditum, moralis instructio perficientem imbuet sensum, acutior allegorie subtilitas proficientem acuet intellectum...'[29]

By means of the allegorical journey of Prudence to Heaven, to secure a soul for the perfect man, Alan sets out the relations of the terms in his epistemology. Prudence travels in a chariot formed by the seven liberal arts, pulled by horses representing the five senses. As she ascends, accompanied by Reason, she investigates the natural phenomena of the universe, both meteorological and astronomical. As the way becomes more difficult she is guided by Theology and Faith, who supplies her with a mirror in which to view what might otherwise dazzle her. Finally, coming to the presence of God, she receives further enlightenment, and having been granted her request, returns with the soul to earth. The poem can be read on one level as an allegory on the acquisition of knowledge of God. Alan shows clearly how the five senses, the seven liberal arts, reason and theology are all necessary to this end. Before leaving Alan it will be instructive to see what kinds of knowledge he considers belong to the highest realms. Book VI outlines what Prudence sees in the mirror given her by Faith, including the armies of the saints and the Virgin and child. Faced with the mystery of his birth, Reason has to yield place to Faith. Further on in her journey she sees reflected

Eternum, celeste,
manens,immobile, certum.
Hic uidet ingenitas species, speculatur ydeas
Celestes, hominum formas, primordia rerum,

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29. Alain de Lille, Anticlaudianus, ed. R. Bossuat (Paris, 1955) prose prologue, 56.

> Causarum causas, racionum semina, leges
> Parcareum, fati seriem mentemque Tonantis,[30]

Here she is enabled to understand the apparently unequal bestowal of spiritual and temporal gifts on men. Finally, by means of images of a three-fold spring, stream and river and the sun and its rays of light, she obtains an understanding of the Trinity. The ray of light 'Qui mulcens urit, urendo mulcebris et ardens/Mitigat, incendens demulcet temerat urens', is obviously akin to the light that 'kindled but did not burn' Hildegard's mind while filling her with knowledge. But just as obviously, the route Hildegard travelled in order to receive it was not the way of traditional Christian studies envisaged by Augustine or Alan, or even, to a lesser extent, those presupposed by monks like St Bernard. The question we must now answer is, why not?

As a first approximation we might put it down to a simple lack of educational opportunity. Hildegard was enclosed at the age of eight in the charge of the anchoress Jutta of Spanheim, whom Hildegard refers to as 'indocta et illiterata'. Yet Jutta, as the child of noble parents, had been taught to read and write.[31] She passed this elementary knowledge on to Hildegard so that she was able to perform the opus dei, which seems to have had a central place in the anchorage, as in regular monastic establishments.

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30. ibid., 137.

31. On the general point see P. Riché: 'Recherches sur l'instruction des laics du IXe au XII siècle', in Cahiers de Civilization Médiévale 5 (1962) 175-82. His reference to Hildegard in this context: 'solum psalterium legere didicerat more nobilium puellarum' does not come from the 'Vie de sainte Hildegard' as he claims (p177,n16), but rather from a comment of Alberic de Trois Fontaines in his Chronicle: MGH ss. XXIII, 834.

Whether the situation would have been different if Hildegard had been an oblate in a regular convent rather than the cell of a pious laywoman is hard to tell. The evidence for a tradition of female education in nunneries is at best scattered. Although it was envisaged by Caesarius of Arles in his Rule, the participation of nuns in intellectual affairs seems to have reached a high point in Merovingian times and to have suffered a steady decline thereafter.[32] The causes are not altogether clear, although Wemple cites regulations for stricter enclosure as one of the reasons why 'the Carolingian revival of learning... bypassed the communities of women'.[33]

Although I know of no provisions specifically forbidding women's learning, there was no tradition of learned women, and perhaps more importantly for Hildegard, of female authorship.[34] Since the standard of education required for women in the church was of the elementary kind that girls might be expected to receive at home, provision for it

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32. Caesarius of Arles (c.470-542).

33. Wemple, op. cit., 187. She also suggests that women's exclusion from preaching and participation in the liturgy put them outside the areas at which the Carolingian reform was aimed: ibid., 188.

34. With the possible exception of the Rule of Gilbert of Sempringham which seems to have forbidden women to learn Latin. Of the two women whose works have come down to us from the intervening centuries, one, Dhuoda was a laywoman who wrote for her son, the other, Hrotswitha, a canoness with close connections to the Ottonian court. The works of neither writer appear to have been at all well known in the Middle Ages. See further WW, esp. chapters 2 and 3.

35. This presupposes that the girls entering convents would come from the upper classes. Certainly this was the case with Hildegard's establishments. The age at which girls would enter was probably around seven, as in Hildegard's case, although the unfortunate nun in Ailred's account of the scandal at Watton had been oblated at the age of four: See G. Constable 'Aelred of Rievaulx and the nun of Watton' in Baker, 206-7. Profession was not usually made before about the age of fifteen, although legally it could be as early as twelve years. See R. Metz 'Le statut de la femme en droit canonique medieval'

within convents was at best a haphazard affair.[35] The example of Heloise is a warning against any tendency to paint a uniformly dismal picture of the educational opportunities for medieval women. It is generally agreed that Heloise had already reached an advanced stage of proficiency in literature, for which the nuns at Argenteuil were at least partly responsible, before she came in contact with Abelard.[36]

It might be argued that monasteries had lost a good deal of their educational function by the twelfth century; certainly standards varied from place to place.[37] Yet even the least ambitious foundation would have had some sort of collection of books, thus providing the possibility of further studies. To take an example close to our subject, Guibert of Gembloux was able to exploit the resources of the famous abbey which he had entered as a boy. The historian Sigebert (d. 1112) was only recently dead, and Abbot Anselm, who must have presided over Guibert's youth, was interested in teaching, correcting manuscripts and enlarging the library. Guibert's acquaintance with such secular poets as Ovid, Virgil and Horace is shown by his writings, as is his affection for Prudentius among the Christian authors.[38]Delehaye suggests that Guibert was first educated in the external school of the monastery on the grounds that he made a choice

Receuils de la Societe Jean Bodin 12,II (1962) 84.

36. This example also shows that even at this time education in convents was not confined to oblates or the professed. Evidence for Heloise's scholarship before she met Abelard comes from his description of her: 'per habundantium litterarum erat suprema': 'Historia Calamitatum' ed. J. Muckle MS 12 (1950) 285-6.

37. See C. H. Haskins The Renaissance of the 12th century (New York, 1957); Delhaye, op. cit.; LLDG; and Pare, op.cit.

38. See H. Delehaye, 'Guibert Abbé de Florennes et de Gembloux' RQH 46 (1889) 16-18.

to become a monk later in life.[39] But even if Guibert were oblated in his childhood he could still have made a free choice when he came of age.

Although some of the evidence I shall use for the methods of education in monasteries goes back to the late eleventh century there is no reason to think that it changed greatly in the interval. It should not be imagined that monks received anything like a course in the seven liberal arts; meditative reading, on a sound basis of grammar was, rather, the order of the day. Some insight into the earlier stages of the process can be gained from a letter of St Anselm, where he describes the method of learning latin and becoming familiar with the classics known as 'declinatio'. Anselm admits that he had little patience for this sort of painstaking instruction.[40] It is also clear from the letter that instruction was on a more or less individual basis in contrast to the public lectio of the schools. A later stage of the process of monastic education is described by Guibert of Nogent when he tells how Anselm himself taught him the techniques of biblical exegesis when he visited Fly, apparently drawn by Guibert's own promise.[41] Once again the personal and intimate quality of monastic teaching is evident, as well as the fortuitous nature of the opportunities.

Monasteries in the twelfth century should not be thought of as

39. ibid., 17.

40. F.S. Schmitt ed,. S. Anselmi Cantuariensis archiepiscopi Opera omnia (Edinburgh, 1946-51) III, 180-81.

41. '...adeo sedule mihi eruditionis indulgebat beneficia, tanta ad id elaborabat instantia, ut unica ac singularis sui ad nos adventus et frequentationis ego viderer solus esse causa': E-R. Labarde (ed.), Guibert de Nogent - Autobiographie (Paris, 1981) 140.

representing a milieu completely independent from that of the schools. There is evidence for a degree of interchange between the two systems. Whether monks were given leave to pursue liberal arts studies in the schools before returning to monastic life is uncertain.[42] Clearly, however, some monks did leave their monasteries to take up the study of medicine and canon law.[43] On the other hand, there are many examples of men educated in the schools becoming monks. While some of these may have been the young students at whom Bernard's sermon was aimed, others, after a life in the schools chose to end their days in a monastery. Alan of Lille appears to have followed this course, although it is not clear when he became a Cistercian. Still others seem to have taken a middle course, entering monastic life after having completed their studies at the schools, and continuing literary activities in the cloister. Theodoric of Echternach, the second author of Hildegard's Vita is an example of this type.

Clearly, then, whereas a variety of institutional opportunites and educational models were open to males, females had a much narrower choice. The question of women attending the schola publica of a cathedral or one of the schools of Paris seems never to have arisen. The necessity for all students to be 'clerici', whether in minor orders or not, would have been enough to exclude women from the

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42. Cf. the story of Rupert of Deutz going forth to engage William of Champeaux and Anselm in debate at Laon: Chenu, op.cit., 270.

43. There were several decrees forbidding this. See Delhaye, op. cit., 266-7.

44. Yet the moral dangers of private tuition are amply illustrated by the example of Abelard and Heloise.

schools, apart from the practical and moral considerations.[44] An even more powerful reason is the fact that such a course of action would have been almost literally inconceivable to women then, and for centuries to come. [45] Moreover, if such a course had been essayed by any woman, male reaction would no doubt have been extreme.[46] Some reasons for this state of affairs will now be examined.

ii. 'Et ego paupercula forma...'.

The peculiar position of women vis à vis the educational and intellectual life of the church is symptomatic of their generally ambivalent status during the twelfth century. Canon Law recognised three possible lifestyles for women: the virgin consecrated to God, the married woman, and the widow.[47] Although in earlier times there had been something like an order of widows, by the twelfth century the widow who wished to dedicate her life to God had become assimilated to the consecrated virgins and was to be found in a convent or house of canonesses.[48]

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45. An interesting example of the way students could only be thought of in terms of the clerical hierarchy is provided by a list of words for church officials in Hildegard's 'lingua ignota' (I give only the latin): 'papa, cardinalis, patriarcha, archiepiscopus, episcopus, clericus, sacerdos, presbiter, diaconus, subdiaconus, acolitus, exorcista, lector, ianitor, cancelarius, prepositus, decanus, cantor, sacrista, magister, magister scolarum, scolaris, discipulus, scriptor, abbas, prior': Ms B, f.58v. For a discussion of the necessary changes in consciousness which finally resulted in women entering universities, see V. Brittain, The Women at Oxford (London, 1960) esp. chapter 2.

46. Judging by the reaction some seven hundred years later; see V. Brittain, op. cit., chapter 3.

47. R. Metz, op. cit., 59-113.

48. The Beguine phenomenon can be seen as a reaction to these rather limited possibilities; its suppression and the reassertion of ecclesiastical control over women's lives a counter-reaction.

Strictly speaking both monks and nuns were equally lay members of the church in the sense of being outside the orders whose members constituted the church hierarchy.[49] The difference between the two was that monks had the potential for inclusion in the hierarchy, while nuns did not. Moreover, we find the numbers of monks who were also priests increasing in the twelfth century. Thus a considerable number of monks enjoyed the sacerdotal prerogatives of performing the mass, hearing confession, excommunication and preaching.[50] Indeed some of the debates about the appropriate manner of life for different groups within the church hinged on just this point. For example, those who wanted a more active pastoral role for monks countered the patristic notion of their penitential function by allowing more active duties to those monks who were also priests.[51]

Women, for reasons which had their origin in Judaic notions of ritual uncleanness, transmitted via the Pauline Epistles and accepted with varying degrees of alacrity by the Fathers of the Church, were

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49. For a twelfth-century account of the seven orders of the church (doorkeeper, lector, exorcist, acolyte, subdeacon, deacon, priest) see Honorius, Gemma Animae: PL172.598f. Honorius goes on to describe the functions and prerogatives of the bishop. There was some confusion about whether this order should be distinguished from that of a priest; all bishops had to be priests, some being consecrated priest shortly before being made bishop.

50. See J. Leclercq, 'On monastic priesthood according to the ancient medieval tradition' Studia Monastica 3 (1961) 138. Leclercq sees it as principally 'an ascetic priesthood', conferred as a reward for particular saintliness; however, among the Benedictines especially, priesthood carried its full complement of parochial functions. Cf. U. Berliere, 'L'exercise du ministere paroissial par les moines dans le haut moyen Age' RB 39 (1927) 246-7 and V. Flint, 'The Place and Purposes of the works of Honorius Augustodunensis' RB 87 (1977) 97-127.

51. On the general debate see B. Bolton, THe Medieval Reformation (London, 1983); also Delhaye, op. cit., 214-217.

virtually debarred from participation in the public cultus - forbidden to approach the altar, handle the consecrated relics or to be ordained.[52] Such ritual prohibitions were enough to establish a prima facie case for the inferiority of women, but to these must be added a body of learned and popular lore by which such decisions were rationalised.

Many of the notions of women's inferiority can be traced back the the Creation story in Genesis and its patristic interpretations, where a mysogonist view was usually favoured over alternative possibilities.[53] So, for example, it was pointed out that man was created first in God's image, and woman only created in the image of man to be his helpmeet. The countervailing fact that woman had been created inside Paradise, and man outside, was rarely pointed out.[54] If that were not bad enough woman was also responsible for man's fall from grace and expulsion from the Garden of Eden. Since this sorry

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52. Scivias, 290. The precise connection between ritual impurity and debarral from the church's public life is uncertain, as the OT has at least one example of women with priestly functions, i.e. the daughters of Aaron. However the prohibition in Leviticus 15 was one of the reasons given in the later tradition for menstruating women, and women post-partum being denied entry to the church. See e.g. Honorius Gemma Animae c. cxlvi: 'Mulieres quoque post partum ecclesiam non intrant, quia inmundos a templo coelesti excludi designant. Alioquin si prae infirmitate valerent, eadem die, qua pararent, intrare ecclesias eis liceret, ut Deo gracias agerent. Propter hanc significationem in multis locis menstruae viris commistae, foris ecclesiam stare solent, et ob hoc poenitentes intrare ecclesiam non debent'. But cf. the letter of Gregory to Augustine in Bede, Historia... Anglorum, Bk1, c.27.

53. For a suggestive, if insufficiently documented, account of the background to patristic mysogony see C. Erickson, The Medieval Vision (New York, 1976) chapter 8. Further documentation is to be found in M-T. d'Alverny, 'Comment les theologians et les philosophes voient la femme' Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévale 20 (1977) 105-129.

54. See Abelard, Muckle, op. cit., 268.

state of affairs was the direct result of her bad counsel it seemed only right that women should not presume to speak or teach in Church.[55] So too, women should always be subservient to their husbands or other men placed in authority over them, such as fathers, in the case of unmarried daughters, or priests and bishops in the case of nuns.

Other conclusions drawn from the story of the Fall reflected upon women's moral character. Having been deceived by the serpent, Eve was seen to be both more gullible and less able to withstand temptation than man.[56] Although logically the possession of either fault might be seen as mitigating the other, both tended to be attributed to her daughters with maximum culpability.

The biblical and patristic traditions of women's inferiority found support in medieval 'scientific' writings about women.[57] Thus by the end of the twelfth century women found themselves on the losing side of the Aristotelian contraries ( such as active and passive, form and matter, perfection and imperfection, completion and incompletion, possession and deprivation) which inform his discussion of male:

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55. Cf. Tertullian, De Virginibus Velandis, 9.

56. Cf. 1 Tim. 2:11-14.

57. See V. Bullough, 'Medieval Medical and Scientific Views of Women', in Sex, Society and History (New York, 1976) 43-60; B. Scholz, 'Hildegard von Bingen on the Nature of Woman' ABR 31 (1980) 361-383.

58. See I. Maclean, The Renaissance Notion of Women (Cambridge, 1983) 10. For the availability of 12th c. Aristotelian translations see R. Bolgar, The Classical Heritage and its Beneficiaries (Cambridge, 1954) 171-3. Heloise quotes 'Macrobius Theodosius Saturnaliorum libro septimo' as her source for Aristotle's claim that women were cold and moist and thus less easily inebriated than men: Muckle, op. cit., 246.

female differences in De generatione animalium and Historia Animalium.[58] An alternative tradition, stemming from Hippocrates and Galen, led to similar conclusions. In these theories, the attribution of cold and moist humours to women made them less perfect than men. The reasoning went as follows:

> Now just as mankind is the most perfect of all animals, so within mankind the man is more perfect than the woman, and the reason for his perfection is his excess of heat, for heat is Nature's primary instrument...'[59]

Such theories allowed a limited equality with men in that both sexes were thought to produce semen.[60] The retention of semen by the woman was held to be the cause of many illnesses, both mental and physical.[61]

Nor should we ignore the contribution of 'folk medicine' to the overall background of belief. Not all popular medical ideas had their ultimate origins in learned authorities. Some seem to have arisen independently in widely separated places. A case in point is

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59. Bullough, op. cit., 50.

60. This was partly a consequence of the idea that women's reproductive organs were similar to a man's but 'could not because of the defect in the heat emerge and project on the outside.' There, were , however difficulties in this schema in accounting for the womb, whose positing as the cause of various female disabilites goes back to Plato's Timaeus.

61. Hildegard held that the production of semen occurred in men and woman, according to their different natures, as a result of the Fall: 'De forti enim et de recta natura viri sanguis eius semen habet quia de terra caro factus est. Sed de recta natura mulieris sanguis eius, quia debilis et tenuis est, semen non habet sed tantum tenuem et parvam spumam emittit': Kaiser, 60. In a later passage she concedes 'spuma seminis in ea rarius quam a viro eicitur et modica et tantae exiguitatis' even so the consequences of its retention for women are worse, as she explains: 'Viri autem...si a mulieribus continent aliquantum infirmantur, sed non tantum quantum feminae, quod plus seminis quam mulieres effundunt.': Kaiser, 76-7.

Hildegard's 'cheese analogy' of conception in Scivias, Bk1 vis.4 c.13. Rather than concluding that Hildegard was acquainted with a learned source for this, Dronke draws attention to similar 'folk' analogies, found for example in Basque culture.[62]

Ideas from these different traditions combined to form the climate of opinion in which the women of Western Europe lived in the twelfth century.[63] It is not difficult to see how a low opinion of their physical, mental and moral powers would be engendered in women when we find such ideas being taken for granted and repeated even by those who were in many ways sympathetic to women. In this connection it is instructive to examine the idea of women which emerges from Abelard's letters of direction sent to Heloise as a kind of Rule for the foundation of the Paraclete.[64] In them many references to the innate weakeness and inferiority of women are to be found. While Heloise specifically phrased her request in terms of the necessity for a new Rule for women because of their inequality with men, Abelard proved more than ready to meet it with a wealth of corroboration from the Bible, Fathers and common prejudice.

Abelard had no doubt that women were morally weaker than men and

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62. Scivias, 75-6; 'Problemata', 114-116.

63. The remarkable tenacity of such ideas has been shown by P. Crawford in 'From the Women's View. Pre-industrial England, 1500-1750' in Exploring Women's Past P.Crawford ed. (Carlton, Vic., 1983) 56-70 and V. Bullough, 'Women, menstruation and nineteenth-century medicine', in Bullough, op. cit., 133-150.

64. On the subject of Abelard's feminism see 'Peter Abelard and the dignity of Women: twelfth-century "feminism" in theory and practice' in PAPV , 287-335. For the texts of the letters see T. McLaughlin, 'Abelard's Rule for religious women' MS 18 (1956) 242-282, and J.Muckle, 'The letter of Heloise on the religious life and Abelard's first reply' MS 17 (1955) 240-281.

less able to stand temptation. For that reason it was more necessary for women to withdraw from the distractions of the world than men:

> Vestrae vero infirmitati tanto magis est solitudo necessaria, quanto carnalium tentationum bellis minus his infestamur et minus ad corporalia per sensus evagamur.[65].

He reveals the basis for this belief in the following passage in connection with the wiles of the devil;

> Quid sexus infirmior adversus eum poterit? Cui seductio ejus tantum timenda est quantum feminae? Hanc quippe ipse primum seduxit et per ipsam virum ejus pariter et totam posteritatem captivavit.[66]

Abelard is also very clear on the division of labour between the sexes. Once again he has been given the lead by Heloise who expresses amazement at the idea of women (nuns) concerning themselves with the harvest.[67] In assigning outdoor work to the men, Abelard orders the sisters to do

> ea tantum quae intus a mulieribus agi convenit, compenendo scilicet vestes etiam fratrum vel abluendo, panem etiam conficiendo et ad coquendum tradendo et coctum suscipiendo.

They are also given charge of the hens and geese 'et quaecumque convenientius mulieres agere quam viri possunt'.[68] While these were no doubt expressions of the customary allocation of men and women's

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65. McLaughlin op. cit., 250

66. ibid., 256.

67. '...ubi umquam ad colligendas menses conventus monialium exire vel labores agrorum habere consuevit...' (Muckle, op. cit., 243.) The Benedictine Rule did not envisage such activities as general: 'Si autem necessitas loci aut paupertas exegerit, ut ad fuges recolligendas per se occupentur, non contristentur; quia tunc vere monachi sunt, si laborare manuum suarum vivunt'. c. 48.

68. ibid.

work, the limitations hedging the office of the sacristan had the backing of higher authority.[69] The nuns appointed to this position are to have charge of making the host and washing the altar cloths, but because of the prohibition about women approaching the altar, they are not allowed to touch 'reliquias...vel vasa altaris...nec etiam pallas' unless they are given to them for washing. That the nuns are excluded from this task by reason of their sex, rather than their non-sacerdotal status, is shown by the next sentence where Abelard writes: '...ad hoc vel monachi vel eorum conversi vocabuntur et exspectabuntur'.[70]

Later, when introducing his discussion of the form of dress to be adopted by the nuns he quotes from Gregory the Great's Sixth and Fortieth Homilies on the Gospels and 1 Pet.3:1-4.[71] To the latter he adds the approving comment:

> Bene autem feminas potius quam viros ab hac vanitate censuit de hortandas quarum infirmus animus id amplius appetit, quo per eas et in eis amplius incitari luxuria possit.[72]

Whether this is based on the Bible, Fathers, or personal observation is not clear. His apparently commonsense directions about the nuns clothing - that all clothes should be duplicated to allow for washing - is bolstered by the biblical authority of Proverbs 31:21, an

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69. For the traditional division of labour see D. Herlihy, 'Land family and Women in Continental Europe' Traditio 18 (1962) 89-120 (especially the distinction between 'Innenwirtschaft' and 'Aussenwirtschaft'.)

70. McLaughlin, op. cit., 160. While the monks might have been priests the conversi were certainly not.

71. PL76.1097; 1305.

72. McLaughlin, op. cit., 281.

interesting example of the habit of appealing to authority. He allows a further concession to the supposed weak natures of women in the matter of bedding, when he writes: 'Culcitrarum quoque mollitiem vel linteaminum usum infirmae ipsarum non negamus naturae'.[73]

The closing pages of the letter deal with the intellectual life of the convent, although not as explicitly as might be wished. It seems that Abelard was happy for those who 'discendi gratiam assecutae sunt de iis quae ad deum pertinent erudiri studeant'.[74] Abelard does not explain in detail the nature of the study he envisaged in this fairly general invitation. Probably, however, he had in mind the model of contemplative knowledge rather than active exploration since he holds up to the nuns the example of Mary listening to the words of the Lord. While this was the ideal towards which they should strive, those who fell short of such devotion might imitate

> saltem et amore et studio sanctarum litterarum beatas illas sancti Hieronymi discipulas Paulam et Eustochium quarum praecipue rogatu tot voluminibus ecclesiam praedictis doctor illustravit.[75]

Further confirmation of this rather restricted view of the educated nun's role is given by the letter Peter the Venerable sent to Heloise after Abelard's death. He encourages her to use her accumulated knowledge of the Scriptures for the instruction of her nuns at the

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73. ibid., 282. Chapter 55 of the Benedictine Rule states:'Stramenta autem lectorum sufficiant matta, sagum et lena et capitale'.

74. McLaughlin, op. cit., 291.

75. ibid., 292. This, of course, casts Abelard himself in the not unflattering position of a second Jerome. We might wonder why he chose Paula and Eustochium rather than Marcella, who was, by all accounts, a more intellectually outstanding and adventurous woman. See Jerome's letters esp 127,29,25,34,37,41. J. Kelly Jerome. His Life, Writings and Controversies (London, 1975).

Paraclete and expresses his sorrow that she could not likewise illuminate the nuns at the Cluniac foundation of Marcigny.[76] He does not, however suggest one obvious way of doing this - by setting down her hard won knowledge in an extended piece of writing which could be circulated beyond her own monastery.

The fact that Heloise, whom Peter the Venerable described as having surpassed 'et pene viros universos' in the study of the arts, apparently wrote nothing more than a few letters requires some explanation. I have already suggested a possible cause in the inferior position accorded women both inside and outside the church. The consequences of this will become clearer when we investigate the reasons male writers give for producing their works.[77]

As in so many other cases distinctions must be made between the monastic and other milieux. Because of the special nature of monastic obedience as laid down in the Benedictine Rule, the monastic writer could only take up his pen at the request of his abbot.[78] This is borne out by the numerous prefaces and dedications of monastic works

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76. See G. Constable, The Letters I, 303-308: 'et te ipsam sacrarum litterarum secreta dulcedine et beatas sorores aperta praedicatione'.

77. In the following discussion I use the terms 'writers' and 'authors' interchangeably. In concentrating on the production end of the process, I hope to avoid any Foucault-type discussion about the existence of 'authors' in the twelfth century. See his 'What is an author?' in M. Foucault, Language, Counter-memory, Practice: selected essays and interviews ed. D.F. Bouchard (Oxford, 1977) esp. 124f. For the purposes of my discussion it is sufficient that certain named individuals produced writings for public circulation, in a more or less self-conscious way. How they themselves justified this unusual activity is my concern; not how such works were viewed by others after they left their pens, or at least their cloisters.

78. Or at the very least with his permission. Indeed he was not allowed to possess a pen of his own. See Benedictine Rule, c.55.

from the time of Bede and Eddius Stephanus to the period under consideration.[79] No doubt there was some element of conventional reluctance in such descriptions, and authors did not need as much encouragement to undertake the task as they might claim.[80]

That it was no mere convention is indicated by Guibert of Nogent's account of his impatience as a young monk at Fly to be invited to put his literary talents to work.[81] His chance came when the prior of a neighbouring monastery who had heard him preach suggested that he put his sermon down in words. Guibert was careful to obtain his abbot's assent to the suggestion and having done so, used it as an excuse to embark on a long held plan to write a commentary on the Hexameron and more. His abbot, however, ordered him to stop after the first chapter of the Hexamaeron, and Guibert tells us, with scarcely a blush, that he had to complete the work in secret.[82] It is not surprising, then that Guibert, in his preface to the work makes no mention of Abbot Garnier, preferring to dedicate it 'Patri et domino sanctae Laudunensis Ecclesiae episcopo Bartholemeo'.[83]

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79. The Lives of the Saints trans. J.F. Webb (Harmondsworth, 1965) 71, 133.

80. I disagree with Curtius, op. cit., 85, who claims it 'is usually a mere topos'. G. Flahiff in his interesting article 'Ecclesiastical Censorship of Books in the 12th century' MS 4 (1942) 1-22, also disagrees with Curtius' view, although on slightly different grounds from those mentioned below.

81. E-R. Labarde, ed. Guibert de Nogent-Autobiographie (Paris, 1981) 134ff.

82. 'non solum ejus, sed et omnium qui ad idipsum deferre poterant praesentias praecavendo, clam illud omni peregi': ibid., 144.

83. PL156.19-20.

For many monastic writers, besides recording the command of their superior to undertake the work, the preface served as a justification for their having written at all. For different genres of writing essayed, different justifications were deployed. Thus the writers of history, loosely conceived, could point to the fallibility of human memory. So Ortleib in the acrostic preface to his Chronicle of Zwiefalten gives a peculiarly monastic justification:

> Ista quippe nimis magna et abhominabilis monachorum, canonicorum seu sanctimonialium est ignorantia, monasteriorum suorum eos nescire primordia, nec saltem preces pro eis fundere, vel orationis verba seminare, quorum temporalia bona grantur metere.[83]

But in spite of this praiseworthy justification for writing, Ortleib records his reluctance to undertake such an arduous task and how he was persuaded 'a patre nostro Oudalrico secundo loci huius abbate nec non dilectissimo fratre nostro Bertulfo sacerdote lenibus et asperis, mollibus ac duris verbis'. Finally, he says, he was worn down by their entreaties, or rather by their threats:

> Tandem, tedio devicti, vel potius terribilibus sacramentis obstricti, licet inertes, licet omni scientia liberali propemodum expertes, preforatorum virorum auctoritate superati, monitus animati, presidiis roborati, ad ultimum suffragiis confisi, manum applicavimus, obedientiae iugo colla submisimus.[84]

A similarly circumstantial account of the genesis of his De Victoria Dei is given by Rupert of Deutz. He describes in his preface to Cuno of Sigeberg, how in the course of an explanation of the vision of Daniel he had expounded

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83. Ortleibi Zwifaltensis Chronicon MGH ss. X 70ff.

84. ibid., 70.

> ...haec et similia...de illis, et de caeteris antiquis sanctis, per quorum labores, et bella necessaria fortiter evicet Verbum Dei, ne periret genus illud, quo carnem assumere proposuerat...

at which, he reminds Cuno, 'tu vehementer delectatus ratione hujuscemodi, repente in istam vocem erupsisti: Scribe mihi librum de Victoria Verbi Dei'.[86]

Writers of the lives of saints or putative saints found a justification in the exemplary nature of their subject. Even so, the author was generally at pains to record the fact that he undertook the work at the command of his superior. So we find Theodoric alluding to the fact that he was asked by two abbots to write Hildegard's life, in each of the three prefaces to his book.[87] Even such a well established figure as St Bernard claimed that his life of the Irish Bishop of Armagh, Malachy, was written at the urging of Abbot Congan.[88]

A less common monastic theme was that of polemic against the enemies of the church. Although best known for his personal letters, Peter the Venerable wrote several polemical pieces, against the Jews, the Saracens and the Petrobrunensians. In his preface 'Adversus secta Saracenorum' he raises the possibility 'causa forte scribendi quaeritur quae ne superfluus scriptor videar, propenenda est'. He answers this by citing the example of the 'antiqui scriptores adversos haereticos'.[89]

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86. PL169.1215.

87. See Appendix 1, 10, 30.

88. See Vita S. Malachiae PL182.1073-1118.

89. PL189.664.

Honorius Augustodunensis, by reason of his ambivalent status, serves as a convenient link between the milieux of the cloister and the schools.[90] The style of his prefaces immediately sets his works apart from those of other monks. Thus his preface to the Elucidarium does not refer to the command of a superior. Instead he writes that 'saepius rogato a condiscipulis quasdam quaestiunculas enodare', he has decided to record the answers in permanent form. He sees the task as useful to himself and others:

> ...ut labor meus non solum praesenti proficiat aetati, disputata curavi stylo transmittere posteritati, rogans ut quicunque studient his legendo incumbere, pro me satagat Deo preces efundere.[91]

- a process which he makes rather difficult by apparently concealing his name. In the preface to his Sacramentarium Honorius also relies on the usefulness of his work as a justification, rather than the command of a superior:

> Hunc libellum De Sacramentis collegi ex sanctorum scriptis, ut quibus deest librorum copia, per hoc compedium illorum sublevatur inopia. Hujus nomen Sacramentarium scribatur, eo quod per illum omne sacramentum divini officii aperiatur.[92]

Canons as well as monks sometimes stressed the command of a superior in their prefaces. Thus Anselm of Havelberg dedicates his Dialogi, on the differences between the Roman and Greek churches, to Eugenius III.

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90. On Honorius see R. Bauerreiss 'Regensburg als religios-theologischer Mittelpunkt Suddeutschlands im XII. Jahrhundert' in L. Scheffczyk et al. edd., Wahrheit und Verkundigung II (München, 1967) 1141-1152. Also V. Flint, op. cit.

91. PL172.109

92. PL172.737. That his works were viewed in this light can be demonstrated by analysing the their reception among monks and canons. See Flint, op.cit.

A command to write from the Pope himself was obviously a very substantial justification, and he makes sure that his readers are aware of the work's origin:

> Sane quicunque haec legerit, sciat me ea scripsisse non tamen ut quemquam docerem, aut quid ego didicerim ut ostentarem, quam ut apostolicae beatitudinis sancto mandato obedirem, cui non obedire majus peccatum esse arbitror, quam tametsi minus utilia seu minus probabilia obedienter scribere.[93]

It might be thought that outside the monasteries, in the more secular atmosphere of the schools or episcopal households, different attitudes would prevail. Yet John of Salisbury includes a twofold excuse for writing the Metalogicon in his dedicatory letter to Thomas Becket. He says on the one hand that his friends pressed him to write it, and on the other that it is a refutation of the Cornifician position, rather than a simple initiative of his own.[94] That even episcopal status was not sufficient to allow a writer to dispense with the notion of having been called on to write by some third person is shown by the example of Gilbert Foliot. He dedicates his commentary on the Song of Songs to his friend and fellow bishop, Robert of Hereford who, he claims, had asked him to write it and who is now being given its first reading:

> Ne tuae Domine, jussionis vana mihi aut vilis videretur auctoritas, tibi illico direxi librum quam postulasti: librum...quem nulli hominum, ante te scribendum, inspiciendumve commisi.[95]

On the other hand, those who taught, whether as canons or clerks,

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93. PL188.1142.

94. D. McGarry, The Metalogicon of John of Salisbury (Berkeley, 1955).

95. PL102.1147.

present a different picture. Confidence in his role as teacher apparently allowed Hugh of St Victor to dispense with a preface to his Didascalicon. The tone of the work is more impersonal than the products of monastic writers; Hugh's opening statements have the generality of almost self-evident truths. Thus he writes: 'Duae praecipuae res sunt quibus quisque ad scientiam instruiter: videlicet lectio et meditatio, e quibus lectio priorem in doctrina obtinet locum...'.[96] On the other hand, where the purpose is not so overtly pedagogical, Hugh seems less prepared to dispense with the preliminaries. Thus in his prologue to Speculum de Mysteriis Ecclesiae he writes: 'De sacramentis ecclesiasticis, ut, tractarem, eorumque mysticam dulcedinem vobis exponerem, vestra rogavit dilectio'.[98]

With the schoolmen we may class the early Abelard. At this stage in his career he seems to have shared the self-confidence of Hugh of St Victor, apparently dispensing with the need for a preface to his Ethics and Theologia Christiana.[97] The Sic et Non, has a preface, but it merely introduces the unusual nature of the book: 'Cum in tanta verborum multitudine nonulla etiam sanctorum dicta non solum ab invicem diversa...'. His Theologia (Scholarium), while superficially conforming to the modest justification of the prefaces of his

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96. PL176.741.

97. The confused state of Abelard's manuscripts means that such a claim should be made provisionally. Although prefaces could be omitted with frequent copying, according to Haring this would not have been the case with Abelard's works. See N. Haring, 'Abelard Yesterday and Today', PAPV, 341-403. esp. 358f. His Theologia Christiana was a revised version of the Theologia Summi Boni, condemned at the Synod of Soissons, 1121.

98. PL 177.335.

contemporaries, has a decidedly self-confident tone:

> Scholarium nostrorum petitioni, prout possumus, satisficientes, aliquam sacrae eruditionis summam, quasi divinae Scripturae introductionem conscripsimus. Cum enim a nobis plurima de philosophicis studiis et saecularium litterarum scripsis studiose legissent, et eis admodum lecta placuissent; visum illis est, ut multo facilius divinae paginae intelligentiam, sive sacrae fidei rationes nostrum penetraret ingenium, quam Philosophicae abyssi puteos, ut aiunt, exhausisset.[99]

Yet in his last years we find Abelard, as a monk, following the monastic practice of writing for a particular, limited audience. His preface to the Expositio in Hexaemeron contains the following passages:

> Supplicando itaque postulas et postulando supplicas...quatenus expositionem horum tanto studiosius intendam quanto difficiliore esse constat intelligentiam, et spiritaliter...persolvam.[100].

Our knowledge of the circumstances of Abelard's life prove the reality of the request. The first phrase omitted reads 'soror Heloissa, in saeculo quondam chara, nunc in Christo charissima'. I have already discussed Heloise's request to Abelard for a monastic rule and information on the beginnings of the order of nuns. She also asked him to compose new hymns for her convent. He sent her a collection of hymns with the following dedication: 'Ad tuarum precum instantiam, soror mihi Heloysa, in seculo quondam cara, nunc in Christo Karissima, ymnos...composui'.[101] Heloise seems indeed to have taken up the role of Paula and Eustochium that Abelard recommended to her at the end of

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99. See Haring, op. cit., 356-7. This is the second redaction of the 'Theologia Scholarium', of which five versions were apparently written between 1133 and 1138.

100. PL178.731

101. PL178.1171.

the letter discussed above.

Such examples could be multiplied indefinitely, but enough have been provided to show that even among male writers it was customary to make some justification for adding to the sum of written words, and in many cases it was more than formulaic. With monastic writers there was the added problem for an aspiring author, of the effacement of one's own will in deference to one's superior. No doubt, too, in a culture so dependent on past authorities, the writer had to have a good deal of self-confidence to rework ground that had been treated by illustrious predecessors. So we find Rupert of Deutz, in his Commentarius in Joannem admitting his presumption in tackling a subject already dealt with by 'vox Christianae legis et organum catholicae fidei, pater Augustinus'.[102] On the other hand, in some circumstances an appeal to the past could be used to justify a writer in carrying on the written tradition. Peter the Venerable was doing this when he pointed to patristic writings on heresy to justify his own.

Perhaps it is not surprising that the least apologetic writers are found among the teachers of the schools. Yet their self-confidence was based on long years of study. While the writings of such men as Abelard or Hugh of St Victor reflect their assurance of their own intellectual worth, they were no doubt also encouraged to write by the general assumption that such an activity was appropriate to their position or calling in life. For monks, the role of teacher, except on a domestic basis, was not generally sanctioned. So too, the kinds of writing considered relevant and appropriate were circumscribed, as

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102. PL169.201-2

was the audience which they might presume to address.

If, then, there were reasons for men to feel diffident about putting themselves forward as writers of books, the situation would have been even more daunting for potential women writers, given the universally low esteem in which their sex was held. That women were responsible for such a tiny proportion of the twelfth- century literary output is both a cause and a consequence of such attitudes. We have seen that Heloise, whose education and abilities surpassed those of many male writers, produced nothing more ambitious than a few letters.

What then of Hildegard, whose education could not compare with that of Heloise? It may have been because she lacked this justification for writing that she had to find a more radical authorisation. We have seen how the command of a superior was frequently given as a reason for composition. If the command of one's abbot was not to be gainsaid, then the order of the Pope must have been even more compelling. Hildegard took this line of argument to its logical conclusion when she claimed to have been ordered by God to write down her visions. The advantage of such a prophetic claim was that God not only provided her with the authority to write, but also with the knowledge of what was to be written. Thus a lack of formal education could be turned into an advantage since it showed that what Hildegard had to impart, as in the case of the prophets of the Old Testament and apostolic times, must have come directly from God. Finally, the role of prophet was available to women both by biblical example and patristic approval. Moreover, since the prophetess was merely God's mouthpiece, and God was known to use the weak to confound the strong, there were no upsetting consequences for the perceived natural order.

## CHAPTER FIVE: THE USES OF PROPHECY (I)

> Et dixi et scripsi haec non secundum adinuentionem cordis mei aut ullius hominis, sed ut ea in caelestibus uidi, audiui et percepi per secreta mysteria Dei.
>
> Scivias, Protestificatio.

In the two preceding chapters I established that Hildegard was seen by her contemporaries, and indeed saw herself, in the role of prophet, and that this role allowed her possibilites of expression and action which would otherwise have been denied her as a woman. Although the assumption of the prophetic role had implications for all aspects of Hildegard's life, in this chapter I will deal with its relationship to her literary activities.[1] The prophetic nature of Hildegard's writing is revealed in two ways. The first is intrinsic to the work itself and is displayed both by its particular form as well as its content. The second comes from evidence provided by Hildegard about the manner and circumstances in which she came to write such works. I shall deal

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1. Here I will confine myself to a discussion of Hildegard's major theological works, the Scivias, LVM and LDO. Hildegard's medical/scientific works, although representing in some form actual works by Hildegard, have not been preserved in any 12th-century manuscripts. As Schrader and Führkötter noted, 'Das ...Hss-Material last zwar kein eindeutiges Urteil über die originale Textgestalten zu, jedoch steht die Verfasserschaft Hildegards ausser Zweifel': Echtheit, 59. So they cannot be subjected to the formal analysis which I shall undertake of the theological works, even though the Vita, LVM and Volmar's letter (Pitra, 346) all claim that these works also resulted from divine illumination. The original form of the Symphonia and the Ordo Virtutum is also doubtful. They probably existed in some separate form before being incorporated into the Scivias: see Peter Dronke, 'Hildegard of Bingen as poetess and dramatist', in Poetic Individuality in the Middle Ages (Oxford, 1970) 150-192 and 'Problemata', 102-106.

with the latter first.

i. Scivias

In looking at the prophetic claims of Hildegard's writings the Scivias is the obvious first choice, not only because it was the earliest of her theological works, but also because it was the one in which she had to establish her prophetic credentials. There are three main sources for the background to the writing of the Scivias: the prologue to the work itself; the autobiographical passages in the Vita, and Hildegard's letter 'De modo visionibus suae' written to Guibert of Gembloux.[2]

Precise dates for all these pieces cannot be established. At least part of the 'Protestificatio' must have been written as late as 1151, the date of the completion of the work, since in it Hildegard notes that it took ten years to finish. On the other hand, it would be reasonable to expect that Hildegard included some form of preface to the portion of the work that was read at the Council of Trier in 1147/8, where an explanation of her undertaking would have been most necessary. Indeed, the 'Protestificatio', in some form, may date from as early as 1141. The evidence from the Vita is probably later, possibly as late as 1173/4.[3] With the letter to Guibert of Gembloux there is more certainty. Written in 1175, it is almost contemporary with the autobiographical fragments. As might be expected, such widely separated testimonies do not agree in all particulars, although sometimes the differences are only apparent - a result of the same

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2. See Scivias, 3-6 and above, p. 21.

3. See above p. 5.

process being described from different aspects or with different emphases. For instance, it would be natural for the 'Protestificatio' to put greater emphasis on the establishment of her prophetic gifts than the later pieces, which were written when her reputation was widespread.

Although the 'Protestificatio' stands in place of a prologue or preface to the Scivias it is unlike those discussed in the last chapter. For one thing, it contains no dedication to any of Hildegard's ecclesiastical or monastic superiors. Its opening sentence, indeed its opening word, immediately sets it in a different tradition:[4]

> Et ecce quadragesimo tertio temporalis cursus mei anno, cum caelesti uisioni magno timore et tremula intentione inhaererem, uidi maximum splendorem, in quo facta est uox de caelo ad me dicens...[5]

The editors of the Scivias indicate possible sources, or at least points of comparison, for Hildegard's text. An examination of these reveals that Hildegard, while imitating the prophetic tone of the Old Testament prophets, does so with very little direct reference to, or appropriation of, the words of the earlier prophets. One obvious difference is the way Hildegard dates her visionary experiences by reference to her own age.[6] Nor do the Old Testament prophets in

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4. Scivias, xviii and reference to Gregory the Great's discussion of the prophetic 'Et'.

5. Scivias, 3, 5-9.

6. Reference to political events or regnal years is the norm, and Hildegard uses these as well. cf. Ezek. 1:1 'Et factum est in trigesimo anno, in quarto, in quinta mensis, cum essem in medio captivorum juxta fluvium Chobar...'.

7. See e.g. Isaiah. 1:1; Jeremiah. 1:1-2; Joel. 1:1; Hosea. 1:1.

general go to such autobiographical lengths in introducing their prophecies.[7] Indeed, the way in which Hildegard departs from the tradition in which she is at pains to locate herself is at least as significant as her identification with it.

The 'Protestificatio' may seem confused and somewhat repetitive at first reading. It recounts the momentous event of 1141 twice; first briefly, and then in more detail before going on to describe its results. The sections are punctuated by a reiteration of Hildegard's divine command to proclaim and write. Hildegard is told in the first section (lines 1-24) by the voice from heaven: 'dic et scribe quae uides et audis'.[8] Here the command does not specify just what it is that Hildegard has to record, although we know from other sources that her vision had been implanted in her before birth. In the first section, however, the voice is more concerned to overcome any objections arising from Hildegard's feelings of incapacity when faced with the task, described in the following words: 'Sed quia timida es ad loquendum et simplex ad exonendum et indocta ad scribendum ea...'[9] Such problems are overcome by the assurance that Hildegard is to speak and write: 'non secundum os hominis nec secundum intellectum humanae adinuentionis nec secundum uoluntatem humanae compositionis, sed secundum id quod ea in caelestibus...uides et audis...'[10] In these passages the verbal and conceptual allusions are as much to New

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8. 1. 9-10.

9. 1. 10-11.

10. 1. 12-15.

11. For the typological connection between the prophets and the evangelists see E. Mâle, The Gothic Image trans. D.Nussey (London, 1961) 159-70.

Testament preaching as Old Testament prophecy.[11] At the conclusion of some further elaboration on this theme Hildegard hears the voice reiterate the command to speak and write 'ea hoc modo edocta'.[12]

The next section, (lines 24-51) returns in time to the first sentence and goes over the events described there in much greater detail. Here the vision is dated both by the year and a more precise account of Hildegard's age: 'Factum est in millesimo centisimo quadragesimo primo Filii Dei Iesu Christi incarnationis anno cum quadraginta annorum septemque mensium essem...'. What she saw in the first section as 'maximum splendorem' here becomes 'maximae coruscationis igneum lumen' which suffuses her entire 'cerebrum...et totum cor totumque pectus', like a flame that warms but does not burn.[13] At this 'repente intellectum expositionis librorum, uidelicet psalterii, euangelii et aliorum catholicorum tam ueteris quam noui Testamenti sapiebam...'.[14]

It is important here to give due weight to every word in the sentence. To translate it, as Newman does for instance, as 'and suddenly I came to understand the meaning of the book of psalms...' or like Fuhrkotter, as 'Und plötzlich hatte ich die Einsicht in den Sinn und die Auslegung des Psalters...', does not catch the complexity of what Hildegard is saying.[15] It is rather that she understood the meaning of the exegesis of the books of the bible. The nature of such

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12. 1. 23.

13. 1. 24-28.

14. 1. 30-33.

15. B. Newman, ., 13; Das Leben, 54.
'O Feminea Forma: God & Woman' in the Works of St. Hildegard. Yale University PhD (1981.)

exegesis will be examined further, below. Here Hildegard's emphasis on her lack of technical expertise in the field of grammar does not rule out the possibility that she had what amounted to an adequate reading knowledge of Latin.

The rest of the passage describes the genesis and nature of Hildegard's visionary gift. Here she dates her first recognition of it to the age of five, 'cum quinquennis essem', although she gives a somewhat earlier date elsewhere.[16] She also explains that she concealed the gift from all but a few like-minded religious and from that time until this, 'cum illud Deus sua gratia manifestari uoluit, sub quieto silentio depressi'.[17] Next comes the famous passage in which Hildegard declares the manner of her visions:

> non...in somnis, nec dormiens, nec in phrenesi, nec corporeis oculis aut auribus exterioris hominis...sed uigilans et circumspecta in pura mente, oculis et auribus interioris hominis...[18]

After acknowledging that it is difficult for 'carnali homini' to understand, she brings her narrative round to the starting point once more with the following declaration: 'Sed puellari meta transacta, cum ad praefatam aetatem perfectae fortitudinis peruenissem, audi vocem de caelo dicentem...'.[19]

This time the voice does not immediately address Hildegard in the second person although 'hominem...quem mirabiliter secundum quod mihi

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16. 1. 37; For dating, see discussion above, p. 21.

17. 1. 41-2.

18. 1. 42-44.

19. 1. 49-51.

placuit excussi in magnis mirabilis trans metam antiquorum hominum...' obviously refers to her.[20] This is clear from the description of the afflictions which are to ensure 'non erigeret in ulla elationis mentis suae'.[21] But if there were any doubt, the voice concludes the section with a direct address to Hildegard: 'Tu ergo, o homo...scribe quae uides et audis.'[22] Having traversed the same ground twice, the narrative moves on to what happened after Hildegard received the order to write. Here we are told 'propter dubietatem et malam opinionem et propter diuersitatem uerborum hominum', Hildegard hesitated to obey, until 'flagello Dei depressa', she became seriously ill.[23] She recovered, however, immediately she set her hand to writing, and brought the work to completion ten years later. The preface is rounded off by a further passage of dating, another expression of the independence of her work from human intelligence or effort and a final reiteration of the call 'Et iterum audiui uocem de caelo mihi dicentem: "Clama ergo et scribe sic".[24]

Thus in fairly small compass the Scivias 'Protestificatio' gives an account of Hildegard's prophetic call, the history of her visionary powers, their nature, including their relationship to her general state of health, and her response to the command. It now remains to be seen whether her other accounts of the event add to or modify the information presented here.

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20. 1. 53-4.

21. 1. 61.

22. 1. 75-8.

23. 1. 79-81; 1. 83.

24. 1. 97-8.

By the time Hildegard wrote the autobiographical passages of the Vita she was representing almost all of her writings as if they came from an external source. We have seen that this is true of her letters, but it applies even to her autobiographical writings, especially those which treat of her prophetic gifts. This contrasts with the 'Protestificatio' just discussed, where Hildegard comments in her own voice on the timing and nature of the call that led to the writing of the Scivias. In the Vita fragment, on the other hand she writes: 'Sapientia quoque in lumine charitatis docet, et iubet me dicere, quomodo in hac uisione constituta sum...'[25] The account put in Hildegard's mouth by Sapientia traces the development of Hildegard's visionary powers from the womb - '...in prima formatione mea cum deus in utero matris mee spiraculo uite suscitauit me, uisionem istam infixit anime mee.'[26]- to the acceptance of her writings by Pope Eugenius at the Synod of Trier and his instruction: 'ut ea que in uisione uiderem uel audirem, scriptis adtencius commendarem.'[27]

When the chronology of the account is compared with that of the Scivias some discrepencies are evident. First - possibly because of the mention of the year 1100 in connection with her birth - Hildegard puts the first experience of the light in the third year of her life.

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25. Appendix, 12. B.Newman, op. cit., has done much to disentangle the relationships between Hildegard's ideas of the various aspects of the divinity. For our purposes, however, 'Sapientia' has the same structural significance as the 'living light' or 'pellucid fountain', in that it is an authoritative source which takes the responsibility from Hildegard for any particular statement.

26. Appendix, 12.

27. Appendix, 14.

It was only gradually that she realised that her way of seeing things was not shared by everyone else. As she grew older she began to realise the effect her pronouncements had on others and ceased to reveal them. Henceforth only Jutta and the monk Volmar are privy to her secrets. Allowing for another two year shift in the dating of significant events in her life Hildegard describes how, after the death of Jutta: 'permansi uidens in quadragesimum etatis mee annum. Tunc in eadem uisione magna pressura coacta sum palam manifestare que uideram.'[28] Obviously this is to be identified with the vision and command of the 'Protestificatio'. So too, the surprising statement: 'Vene autem medulle mee tunc plene uirium erant' is probably a developmental description rather than one of her general health, to be taken as equivalent to her description of herself in the 'Protestificatio': 'cum ad praefatam aetatem perfectae fortitudinis'.[29] In this account it appears that Hildegard confided in Volmar ('cuidam monacho magistro meo'), who encouraged her to start writing the visions down.[30] Having accepted their divine origin, Volmar told Abbot Cuno about them and with the abbot's permission, began his lifelong collaboration with Hildegard.

The next section presumably describes the writing of the Scivias.[31] If so, it is to be compared with 'Protestificatio', lines 30-35. Here

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28. Appendix, 13.

29. Scivias, 4. line. 49. For Hildegard's ideas on maturation see Kaiser, 61-2, and for the concommitant growth of the powers of the soul, see Scivias, 78-9.

30. Appendix, 13.

31. This is taking 'eadem visione' to be a description of the particular vision which inaugurated her career as a writer, rather than referring more generally to her visionary powers.

she says she understood '...scripta prophetarum, ewangeliorum et aliorum sanctorum et quorumdam philosophorum, sine ulla humana doctrina'.[32] The inclusion of 'et' between 'aliorum sanctorum' and 'quorumdam philosophorum'in Ms B not only makes much better grammatical sense, but means that this account now closely parallels the earlier one.[33] That Hildegard's reading had not been confined to works of scripture is shown by the knowledge of current exegetical techniques displayed in her writings. In this passage, her reference to the works 'quorumdam philosophorum' admits as much. In the earlier work the same thing is suggested less explicitly by her reference to understanding the 'expositionis' of the scriptural texts. [34]

But if Hildegard is admitting that her understanding of the scriptures has been mediated by a reading (or hearing) of other exegetes what is left of her claim to divine illumination? Hildegard, it seems, wishes to maintain it, but at a higher level of abstraction. She says, in fact, that she could understand the writings, including commentaries, without any human teaching, which together with her references to Jutta's lack of education, looks like making a virtue of necessity. It is, indeed, a preemptive strike against those who might cast doubt on her works because she lacked the educational background expected of a theological writer. It is not, then, as if Hildegard disparages the educational formation which she

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32. Appendix, 14.

33. See Dronke 'Problemata', 107, where he notes the former but not the latter. 'Et' is also found in Ms G and G1.

34. While it is possible to understand this as referring to something internal to the works themselves (something like their 'meaning'), it is more likely to refer to something outside the works, that is their 'exposition' as it was found in commentaries of 'sanctorum' and 'philosophorum'. The fact that the sentence already contains a word for 'meaning' suggests that Hildegard was making the second claim.

lacks. It is, rather, that she claims to have received it more suddenly, more directly and without the mediation of a human teacher.[35]

For further explanation of how Hildegard saw and understood the subjects of her writings we have the evidence of her letter to Guibert of Gembloux, 'De modo visionis suae'.[36] This, her first letter to the Flemish monk, was written in response to several direct questions he put to her about her visionary powers, contained in two letters.[37] The questions deserve to be quoted in full, as they include those that later investigators of Hildegard's gifts were prompted to ask. Guibert inquires specifically whether

> postquam visiones tuae, te jubente et indicante, a notariis scripto exceptae fuerint, a memoria tua elabantur, adeo ut quid dixeris omnino non recolas...utrum easdem visiones latino dictes eloquio, aut te illas teutonice proferente, alius has in latinum transferat.... utrum elementia litterarum ab infantia didiceris, et divinas Scripturas studio lectionis, an sola unctione magistra, quae vos vult de omnibus docet, compereris.[38]

To these questions Guibert adds the following in his second letter:

> utrum dormiens in somnis, an vigilans per excessum mentis, visiones tuas contempleris et ...quid etiam alicujus libri tui titulus, id est Scivias, scilicet Sciens vias, an aliquid melius aliquid interpretari

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35. The contemporary expectation that a student would need the instruction of a teacher to interpret a commentary on a work of scripture seems to lie behind Abelard's description of how he amazed his fellow students at Laon by lecturing on an obscure prophecy of Ezekiel, depending solely on his reading of the work in conjunction with the commentary; see Historia Calamitatum, ed. Muckle.

36. This is the title of the slightly abbreviated version found in R.

37. Pitra, 328-31 and 378-9, in which he refers to 'aliis quae in priori epistola interrogavi'.

38. Pitra, 330.

> alicujus libri tui titulus, id est Scivias, scilicet Sciens vias, an aliquid melius aliquid interpretari possit; et utrum alios aliquos libros conscripseris...[39]

Hildegard addresses herself to these questions in her reply. However, it is those of the second letter which receive the most straightforward responses. Indeed, one might be tempted to think that she had forgotten about Guibert's earlier letter, were it not for the passage about her retaining the memory of her visions: 'Quid quid autem in hac uisione uidero seu didicero, huius memoriam per longum tempus habeo, ita ut, quoniam illud aliquando uiderim et audierim recorder', and her brief affirmation 'latinisque verbis non limatis ea profero'.[40] On the matter of her educational formation she is less explicit. It may be, of course, that Guibert, by presenting the dichotomy, education vs. inspiration, is obliterating other possibilities, just as he does by positing the alternatives, dreams vs. ecstacy, in his second letter. Hildegard might have preferred to maintain both possibilities simultaneously, as indeed she did in the passages from the Scivias and Vita. She does not deny that she has had some - albeit inadequate - education, nor that her understanding is a heaven-sent gift. In her reply to Guibert she seems to disregard his rather crude formulation in order to concentrate on explaining the mechanics of her vision. Since I shall be dealing with the psychological and physiological aspects of Hildegard's visions in a later chapter, it is only necessary to note here Hildegard's indication that her visions are the source of all her different kinds of knowledge. Not only does she understand written works, but abstract qualities and the actions and fates of individuals appear to her in them '...ut sol, luna et stelle in aqua apparent, ita

39. Pitra, 379.

40. WW, 252.

scripture, sermones, virtutes, et quedam opera hominum formata in illo michi resplendent'.[41]

In this letter Hildegard goes some way towards explaining the relationship between the language of her vision and of her writings. Hildegard has said that she only offers for public consumption the words that she hears in the visions. However, these words are not to be understood in the usual sense - for one thing she sees them as well as hearing them ('video et audio') - moreover, 'non sunt sicut verba que ab ore hominis sonant, sed sicut flamma choruscans, et ut nubes in aere puro mota'.[42] Moreover, although Hildegard often writes as though she is the mere uncomprehending instrument of God's word, in the case of the theological visions at least, she claims to have some understanding of the matters on which she pronounces, since she writes, '...et simul video et audio ac scio, et quasi in momento hoc quod scio disco'.[43]

Clearly, then, from the form and content of the 'Protestificatio' which prefaces the Scivias, and from her later descriptions of how she came to write the work, Hildegard was consciously placing it in the prophetic tradition. But whereas many of the Old Testament prophets received a call to go to a certain place to proclaim a message about a particular political situation, Hildegard's call allows her a wider

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41. WW, ibid.

42. ibid.

43. ibid. Interpretation of God's word was the hallmark of prophecy. Thus Daniel was the prophet, rather than Nebuchadnezzar.

range of activity. It covers the entire heilsgeschichte and authorises her to write down the knowledge she receives by divine illumination, whatever its subject. While a straightforward eschatological prophecy might be entrusted to herdsmen and gatherers of wild figs (Amos. 7:14), the tradition that Hildegard claimed to be explicating was a literate one, based on the understanding of written materials. It is not surprising, then, that she departs from the exemplars of the earlier prophetic tradition in her emphasis on her understanding of such materials, in spite of her lack of education and formal training.

To make this point clearer, it will be necessary to deal, at least in outline, with the form and content of the Scivias itself. The work is divided into three books, each consisting of a number of visions. The visions of each book are presented as a series. The first is introduced in terms reminiscent of the 'Protestificatio', although not at such length, while those that follow are introduced by some temporal clause, such as: 'Post haec vidi', or 'et deinde vidi...'. Whether Hildegard intended the visions in each book to be understood as a single, dynamic vision undergoing a series of transformations, or whether each represents a different experience, viewed sequentially (as the descriptions 'visio prima', 'visio secunda' might suggest) will be considered further in a later chapter on the phenomenology of Hildegard's visions. Here we are concerned with the formal aspects of her record of the visions.

Significantly, Hildegard puts structural markers to indicate its prophetic nature at the beginning and end of each of the three divisions of the work. Furthermore, each separate vision is marked by

the repetition of a concluding sentence, which is different for each of the three books. So the visions of the first book conclude with the words:

> Unde quicumque scientiam in spiritu sancto pennas in fide habet, iste admonitionem meam non transcendat, sed eam in gustu animae auae amplectendo percipiat.[44]

Book Two has the more biblical:

> Sed qui uigilantibus oculis uidet et sonantibus auribus audit, his mysticis uerbis meis osculum amplexionis praebeat, quae de me uiuente emanant.[45]

The last book uses the following sentence to mark the end of each of the thirteen visions:

> Qui autem acutas aures interioris intellectus habet, hic in ardente amore speculi mei ad uerba haec anhelet et ea in conscientia animi sui conscribat.[46]

This last sentence is incorporated into a longer admonitory conclusion in the thirteenth vision of the final book.

Here the voice of <u>Caritas</u> apparently has the last word in pronouncing a curse on those who '...mystica uerba huius libri recusauerit' and a blessing on those who '...eam gustauerit et in memoriam suam posuerit'. A second warning is given to those who might think of belittling the writings '...per rabiem suam minuerit aut in alienum locum alicuius humani sensus causa abduerit et ita deriserit'. Next comes a call for Hildegard to praise God, before the usual concluding sentence for Book Three brings the entire work to a close.

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44. See Scivias, 11, 38, 59, 92, 99, 108.

45. Scivias, 123, 132, 158, 171, 224, 306, 325.

46. Scivias, 324, 370, 388, 407, 431, 461, 476, 514, 544, 537, 603, 613, 636.

Before passing from our description of the structure of the Scivias to a discussion of its themes, the formal aspects of the individual visions should be explained. Given the length of the work, the formal arrangement of the Scivias is remarkably constant, although two basic patterns emerge. In the first, Hildegard describes the experience, principally its visual aspects, although sound effects are sometimes included. The close of the vision proper is marked by a phrase which becomes almost stereotyped, and differs for each of the three books. In the first book, after some initial experimentation, it is: 'Audiui iterum uocem de caelo dicentem mihi'; in Book Two, the similar: 'Et iterum audiui uocem de supernis caelorum dicentem mihi', while the last book favours the formulation: 'Et audiui lucidum illum qui sedebat in throno dicentem'.[47]

In all cases, the voice has the task of explaining the visions, which it does by referring back to the actual words used by Hildegard in her original description. The method can be seen from the following example concerning the fall of Lucifer, taken from the second vision of Book One. Hildegard's description of this vision contains the following passage: 'Et ecce lacus multae latitudinis et profunditatis apparuit, os uelut os putei habens et igneum fumum cum multo foetore emittens...'[48] This is explained in chapter five of the vision as follows:

> Sed lacus ille multae latitudinis et profunditatis qui tibi apparet est infernus, latitudinem uitiorum et profunditatem perditionum, ut uides, in se continens, os etiam uelut os putei habens et igneum fumum cum multo

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47. The formulations are not as consistent as those which conclude the visions.

48. Scivias, 13.

> foetore emittens; quia in uoracitate sua submersionem animarum tenens...'[49]

With a few exceptions which will be treated later, all the commentary on the visions is to be understood as emanating from this heavenly voice. Führkötter's punctuation of the Scivias obscures the fact, by placing the utterances of the voice in quotation marks only when they come at the end of the visionary description, but not if they commence the first chapter.[50] The matter is further complicated since the voice is no respecter of (grammatical) persons. In the explanations, third person narrative ('Deus qui omnia...') is mingled indiscriminately with the first person ('Ego sum medicus..').[51] So in the second vision of the third book we find 'Ego omnipotens...', 'Tunc praevidit deus..' and a reference to 'Filio meo', within the space of a page.[52] Whatever the reasons for this confusion, it seems clear that all the commentary is intended to issue from God, and not to be thought of as a mixture of the divine word and Hildegard's.

There is a similar variation in the person addressed by God. Whereas in most cases it is clearly Hildegard herself (indicated by the use of the second person singular), at times the voice adopts a more general perspective and will break out in apostrophes to different groups of people. These include 'O sacerdotes', 'O filii claritatis' and 'O stulti homines'.[53]

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49. ibid., 16.

50. The chapter divisions are themselves somewhat erratic.

51. Examples from Bk 1, vis.3.

52. Scivias, 364.

53. ibid., 55, 166, 268, 303.

The pattern described above is varied by one where figures from the vision are heard to speak. It is first encountered in the fourth vision of Book One, where the soul which Hildegard sees in the vision bears the burden of explanation until chapter eight, when she hears 'de caelo uocem...dicentem' which resumes the commentary. So too Ecclesia speaks in Book Two, third vision, before giving place to 'uocem de caelo'. This, however, is all contained within the description of the vision itself, before the numbered chapters begin, in contrast to the previous example. So too, in the third vision in Book Three, the virtues are heard to speak during Hildegard's description of the vision, but at its close, '...sedens in throno, qui mihi haec omnia ostendebat dixit mihi...' heralds the extended commentary on the vision.[54]

Considerations of length seem to dictate whether the words will be confined to the vision proper, or spill over into the chapters. Thus in the sixth vision of Book Three, where there are eight virtues to be accommodated, their words extend to chapter nine, where 'qui sedebat in throno' takes up the tale. The same procedure is followed in visions eight and nine, where a further set of virtues is introduced. Vision ten incorporates the words of the 'son of man' (only identified as such by the occupant of the throne in chapter seventeen) and five other virtues. The twelfth vision of the last book reverts to the earlier pattern of explication by incorporating 'Iterum audiui vocem de caelo mihi dicentem.' at the close of the description. The final vision of the work is different again. First of all it is primarily aural, as the opening words indicate:

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54. ibid., 374.

> Deinde uidi lucidissimum aerem, in quo audiui in omnibus praedictis significationibus mirabili odo diuersum genus musicorum'

and the vision, or, rather audition, ends : 'et sonus ille, ut vox multitudinis in laudibus de supernis gradibus in harmonia symphonizans, sic dicebat'.[55] These words serve, in fact, to introduce Hildegard's Symphonia, and with a little more elaboration in chapter nine, a version of the Ordo Virtutum.[56] Having thus combined these rather disparate elements into her visionary framework Hildegard concludes the work with a further address from the 'uox de caelo'.

My investigation of the formal structure of the Scivias reveals that the chief places of interaction between Hildegard and the explicator of the visions are to be found in the initial visions of each book. That these take structural, as well as chronological precedence over the others in the same book is indicated by the way Hildegard uses them as points of reference. For example, the description, 'lucidus qui sedebat in throno' which introduces most of the divine explanations in Book Three, refers back to the first vision of the last book, although the phrase is not introduced until the third, which contains no mention of a throne. Before going on to describe the content of the Scivias we should investigate these strategic places for further indications of Hildegard's intentions.

The opening vision of Book One gives a further reason for Hildegard's call, not mentioned in the 'Protestificatio'. The voice draws attention to the laxity of those who should act as spiritual

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55. ibid., 614; 615.

56. See above, pp. 32-3.

leaders : 'quatenus hi erudiantur qui medullam litterarum uidentes eam nec dicere nec praedicere uolunt, quia tepidi et hebetes ad conseruandam iustitiam Dei sunt...'.[57] The writing of the Scivias is seen as contributing to the work of salvation: '...clama et dic de introitu incorruptae salvationis'. Thus it is particularly appropriate for a woman to undertake the task as the following words point out:

> Ergo in fontem abundantiae ita dilitare et ita in mystica eruditiione efflue, ut illi ab effusione irrigationis tuae concutiantur qui te propter praeuaricationem Euae uolunt contemptibilem esse.[58]

In the opening vision of the second book Hildegard reverts once more to the contrast between learned men and her own inferior education and sex when she writes: 'Et ego homo non calens in forma fortium leonum nec docta exspiratione illorum, sed manens mollite fragilis costae imbuta mystico spiramine...'.[59] At the end of the vision the voice again addresses Hildegard, enlarging on the themes treated in a similar position at the opening of the first book. Once more, Hildegard's understanding is proclaimed to be heavenly rather than earthly: 'O quae es...in nomine femineo indocta de ulla doctrina carnalium magistrorum, scilicet legere litteras per intelligentiam

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57. Scivias, 8.

58. ibid. The strong expression of hostility towards women is matched by the high claims made for Hildegard in associating her with the work of redemption, as it was the Virgin Mary who was usually mentioned in such a context. Cf. the letter of Guibert of Gembloux, (Pitra, 395) where he takes the idea to almost idolatrous lengths.

59. Scivias, 110.

60. ibid., 311. This should not be taken to mean that she cannot or does not read, but that her understanding is different in kind from that of the 'intelligentiam philosophorum'.

philosophorum, sed tacta lumine...'[60] Again her task is to declare God's ways to his people, since those who should do so, appear 'nolentes se abstrahere de malis desideriis suis..'[61] The command which concludes the personal part of the message to Hildegard expresses an even more violent derogation of women than the previous one:

> Unde o pusilla animo quae interius es docta de mystico spiramine, quamuis conculta sis per uirilem formam propter praeuaricationem Euae, tamen dic igneum opus tibi demonstratur certissime ostensione.[62]

The opening words of the first vision of the third book immediately set it somewhat apart from the other two. Here Hildegard does not draw attention to her sex or lack of education. Rather she makes a protestation of humility in general terms: 'Et ego homo sumpta ab aliis hominibus, quae non sum digna nominari homo propter transgressionem legis Dei...uidi ad orientem; et ecce illic conspexi...'[63] At the close of the vision, the difference is heightened by the inclusion of what amounts to a dialogue between Hildegard, and 'ipsum sedentem in throno'.[64] Having been directed to write down what she sees and hears, Hildegard begins to voice her doubts 'de interiori scientia eiusdem uisionis', and asks to be given

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60. ibid., 311. This should not be taken to mean that she cannot or does not read, but that her understanding is different in kind from that of the 'intelligentiam philosophorum'.

61. ibid., 112.

62. ibid.

63. ibid., 327. Possibly this is another reference to original sin.

64. ibid., 329.

65. ibid., 329. The 'de' in the first quotation is probably to be read as 'concerning', rather than 'from' though both meanings are attested in Hildegard.

'intellectum, quatenus possim enarrabiliter proferre haec mystica'.[65] To this she receives the disconcerting reply, reminiscent of the Song of Songs: 'O quam pulchri sunt oculi tui in divina narratione...'[66] Not fully reassured, Hildegard insists on her unworthiness to reveal such mysteries and begs for mercy. In answer she receives the following words: 'Nunc dic ut docta es. Uolo ut dicas, quamuis cinis sis. Dic reuelationem panis qui Filius Dei est...'[67]

Thus a study of the formal or structural aspects of the Scivias reveals that the entire work has been conceived within a visionary framework. Indeed, it consists of nothing but a series of self-explaining visions. However, the nature of the visions and the instructions which issue through them, put Hildegard in the position of a prophet - one who not only knows the secrets of God but who has the authority to tell them publicly for the edification of his people. This is insisted upon throughout the work, often in a formalistic, almost ritual manner. The sheer force of repetition of such phrases, formulae and ideas not only binds together what might otherwise be seen as a diffuse work, but also gives it a particular weight and authority.

Any account of the content of the Scivias which seeks to do more than describe the twenty-six visions seriatim is hampered by the scope of the work and a lack of appropriate terminology. Because of this, it is useful to proceed by a kind of via negativa. First and most obviously it is not a biblical commentary, although it includes

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66. ibid., 329.

67. ibid., 330.

explanations of short passages from the Bible. Moreover, the visions themselves are all provided with a gloss by the divine exegete. Each portion of the vision is usually provided with an explanation on a single level, whether topological, allegorical or anagogical. Since the visions are all in some sense symbolic, a literal explantion is usually unnecessary, unless it is to identify the different characters who speak.

Nor is it a set of meditations, although the visions include scenes used for meditation in other works, such as that of Christ on the cross. There is very little that might be termed 'affective spirituality' in the work. This can be partly explained by its structure, since it is God who provides the commentary to the scenes, rather than Hildegard describing her reaction to them. But the explanations are appeals to the intellect rather than the emotions, as a single example will show.

The sixth vision of Book Two shows Christ hanging on the cross and a female figure, Ecclesia, catching the blood that flows from his side in a golden chalice. Hildegard hears the voice from heaven declare : 'Haec Fili, sit tibi sponsa in restaurationem populi mei, cui ipsa mater sit, animas per saluationem spiritus et aquae regenerans.'[68] So too, the commentary is concerned with the logic of the redemption, rather than the suffering humanity of Christ:

> Quia cum de uulnerato latere eiusdem Filii mei cruor exiuit, mox saluatio animarum exorta est, quoniam gloria illa de qua diabolus cum sequacibus suis expulsus est homini data est, cum idem Vnigenitus meus mortem in cruce temporaliter subiens inferno spoliato fideles animas ad

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68. Scivias, 230.

caelestia duxit...'.[69]

Moreover, there is very little mention of the life of Christ on earth. It is true that in the same vision: '...signa natiuitatis, passionis et sepultrae necnon resurrectionis et ascensionis saualtoris nostri Uinigenitu Dei uelut in speculo apparuerunt...'[70], but this is merely a part of the description of the Mass. Even the scene of the baby in the stable - 'Sed Filius Dei in praesipio iacuit, quia Mater eius paupercula fuit' - is quickly passed over in a chapter in praise of humility.[71]

Nor can the Scivias be seen as a straightforward Heilsgeschichte since the account does not begin with the creation of the world, to continue through the Incarnation to the final judgment. In fact there is no biblical account of the Creation, although there is an explanation of the allegorical meaning of existing cosmology.[72] Moreover, the fall of man is described in at least three different visions, from different points of view.[73] Finally, we cannot classify the Scivias as a simple theodicy, although it is much concerned with good and evil and divine justice.

If indeed we need a label for the work, which covers most aspects of the relationship between man, God and the cosmos in its past, present and future aspects, we might do worse than call it a 'summa', although

69. ibid., 232.

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70. ibid., 231.

71. ibid., 37.

72. Bk1, vis.3.

73. Bk1, vis.5 c.2,9,10; Bk2, vis.1 c.8; Bk2, vis.6. See index, 667-8, under 'Adam'.

God puts it more modestly when he commands Hildegard to write 'de introitu incorruptae salvationis'.[74]

The final question to be asked here is what readership Hildegard intended her book to reach. The question would be more easily answered if Hildegard had written a work aimed specifically at teaching people how to live a holy life. Although this is what Hildegard suggests she is doing, in accepting God's command, it is only in the broadest sense, in that she is giving a systematic account of various aspects of the Christian faith and indicating the relationships that hold between them.

While the book is apparently aimed at the widest possible audience (albeit necessarily limited to those who can read Latin), as the apostrophes of the text are often of the inclusive form 'o stulti homines..', there is no doubt that Hildegard had the upper ranks of the church especially in mind. It will be remembered that Hildegard sent the Scivias as a work-in-progress to the Pope, and followed it up with the finished version.[75] Moreover, her strictures on those who failed in their job of instructing God's people suggest that she had bishops and other members of the secular clergy in mind. Indeed, the group singled out by rank in the apostrophes are the 'sacerdotes'.[76] This does not exclude the possibility that she anticipated monastic readers; and in fact, several of the surviving manuscripts of the

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74. ibid., 8. A recollection of chapter 73 of the Benedictine Rule which describes itself as 'initium conversationis'?

75. See Echtheit, 102f.

76. Scivias 303, see also 586 'O fructuosi doctores boni lucri...'.

77. e.g. the lost Eberbach Ms, manuscripts from Parc and St Eucharius. see 'Problemata', 99.

Scivias come from monastic libraries.[77] It is clear, however, that the work was intended for a larger audience than Hildegard's own convent, since many topics discussed, such as what is lawful and what illicit in marriage, are at best irrelevant for cloistered nuns.[78] Such subjects might well have been required reading for priests in their confessional capacities, which would include, as we saw above, a certain number of monks.

In the Scivias then, Hildegard was chiding the clergy with what was (in both senses of the word) their business. She was able to do this by casting the entire work as a series of divinely glossed visions, thereby reducing her own part to that of a mere instrument. Let us now trace the course of her radical effacement in her next work, the Liber Vitae Meritorum.

The form of the work bears many resemblences to the Scivias. Once again Hildegard presents a series of visions which are explicated by the voice 'de coelo'. But whereas the former work consisted of twenty-six more or less discrete visions , those of the LVM appear to be variations or developments of a single type where Hildegard sees '..virum tantae proceritatis quod a summite nubium coeli usque ad abyssum pertingebat' and a great variety of virtues and vices issuing from the clouds. Since each of the five books develops aspects of this single vision the structure of the work is not as clearly defined as the Scivias. The visions in the LVM are more dynamic and the explications are combined with the descriptions as the visions

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77. See p. 166

78. Contrast Herrade of Hohenberg and the Hortus Deliciarum which was specifically written for the nuns of her own establishment. cf. the edition of R. Green et al. in Studies of the Warburg Institute 86 (1979)

unfold. Thus the distinction between the parts that Hildegard describes in her own words, and the divine explanations of what is described, are somewhat more blurred. A constant feature of the books of the LVM is the inclusion of a section outlining the punishment to be expected for each vice described, and the way to avoid it by penitence. In the description of the punishment Hildegard often includes explanatory material which in the Scivias would have been the exclusive province of God.

So for example, in Book 1, ch.121, 'De poena ineptae laetitiae', Hildegard describes the bog in which 'multitudo minutorum vermium scaturiebat', as the place of punishment of those guilty of such transgressions. Apart from the colourful description Hildegard supplies some reasons for the things she sees. Here she writes:

> ... et quoniam impietatem in ea dilexerant, a nebula ipsius obtenebratur; et quoniam in eadem laetitia inutilia verba protulerant, a vermibus ejus laedabantur...'[79]

While this is not an explanation of great complexity, it is an advance on what she felt justified to offer in the previous work. However, even in such cases of simple explanation Hildegard covers herself by previously remarking : 'Et vidi, et intellexi haec'. Thus her interpretations have the same guarantee as the visions themselves. Moreover, in each case where the 'poenitentia' for the sin is described, Hildegard introduces it with the following passage: 'Et de praefata vivente luce vocem iterum mihi dicentem audivi: Haec quae vides, vera sunt, et ut ea vides, ita sunt, et plura sunt'.[80] At the

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79. Pitra, 57.

80. Pitra, 42, 46, 48, 49, 57 etc.

end of the account of each separate transgression, the voice repeats the following sentence: 'Haec autem de poenitentiam animabus purgandis et salvandis dicta sunt, et fidelia sunt; et fidelis his attendat, et ea in memoriam bonae scientiae componat.'[81] The same words are used to conclude each of the five books.[82]

Thus the internal structure of the LVM can be compared with that of the earlier work, in its visionary framework and ritual repetitions. Where the LVM differs most from the Scivias is in its explicit justification for undertaking the task of writing. It has no equivalent to the 'Protestificatio' and the introduction to the first book is considerably shorter and less emphatic than that of the Scivias. Once again, the work opens in prophetic style, with the words: 'Et factum est in nono anno...', followed by a dating in terms of Hildegard's previous writings. Then, presumably as a direct imitation of the 'Protestificatio', Hildegard dates the vision once more:

> Igitur, in sexagesimo primo aetatis meae anno, qui est millesimus centesimus quinquagesimus octavus Dominicae Incarnationis annus, sub pressura Apostolicae Sedis, regnante Friderico Romanorum imperatore, audivi vocem de coelo mihi dicentem:...[83]

The message of the voice this time, after an apparent reference to the increasing complexity of Hildegard's visions, was that she should write: 'secundum me et non secundum te, et scribe secundum me et non

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81. ibid., 49.

82. ibid., 58, 101, 143, 180, 244.

83. Pitra, 8. There are hints of similar repetitions in some of the OT prophets, e.g. Ezek. 1:1-4.

84. ibid., 'Tu quae ab infantia tua, per spiritum Domini, non corporali, sed spirituali vera visione docta es, dic ea quae ;nunc vides et audis. Nam a principio visionum tuarum, quaedam visiones velut liquidum lac tibi ostensa sunt; quaedam autem velut suavis et lenis cibus tibi denutadae sunt; quaedam autem velut solidus et perfectus cibus tibi manifestatae sunt.'

secundum te'. [84] No concessions are made here to Hildegard's doubts or hesitations, if indeed she had any at this time. Rather, we are told 'Et ego, testimonio hominis illius quem, ut in prioribus visionibus praefata sum,...et testimonio cujusdam, puellae mihi assistentis, manus ad scribendum posui'.[85] The introduction closes with a repetition of the command to write, as in the Scivias.

In keeping with this more muted insistence on Hildegard's incapacities and the divine command which overcomes them, the openings of the other four books contain descriptions of the vision, without special apologetics. Indeed, in some cases, even the expected command to write down what she sees and hears seems to be missing, or at least obscured by the intervention of other speakers in the vision.

The LVM while maintaining the formal characteristics of the earlier work, in so far as this is possible, given the more complicated nature

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85. ibid.

86. The intended audience for the book is likewise comparable to that of the Scivias, even in its elusiveness. Führkötter has suggested that the work incorporates Hildegard's reactions to her experiences of personal conflict within the convent. Certainly some of the sections of the work - those dealing with 'tristitia saeculi', 'vagitans' or even 'petulentia' could be seen as addressing such a situation. However the topics covered extend beyond the requirements of the convent. Although the nuns might be interested in 'poenitentia virginum lapsarum', a discussion of adultery seems unnecessary, not to mention that 'peccati contra naturam'. Was Hildegard then, writing a penitential manual? While she prescribes 'poenitentia' for various classes of sins, these are given in fairly general terms. Thus the penalty for 'furta' is 'jejunis... ac genuum flexionibus', but no quantification is attempted. A distinction is made for 'tristitia saeculum' between those in the world (who are to join a religious order) and those already professed (who are to devote themselves to sacred 'lectio'). Moreover, there are specific instructions to the 'magister animarum' to use his discretion in assessing the penitent.

of the visions, shows a marked decrease in apologetics and special pleading.[86] It seems reasonable to attribute this to the fact that Hildegard, having established her prophetic credentials in the Scivias could rely on the formal aspects of the work to guarantee its prophetic nature. The theory can be further tested by an examination of Hildegard's third and last major work, the Liber divinorum operum.

A comparison of the LDO with Hildegard's earlier works shows that Hildegard maintained a much tighter control of the structural aspects than in the LVM or even the Scivias. While the LDO is generally recognised as Hildegrd's most profound statement of her metaphysical and theological thought, it has not, I think, been pointed out that it is also her most perfect formal and structurally-articulated work. The structural features all serve to emphasise the divine source of her writing, as they did in the in the LVM and Scivias. While the prophetic markers are still much in evidence, there is little or no direct apologetic writing. Hildegard does not portray herself in this work as doubting her capacities, at least not her intellectual ones.

The Preface to the LDO follows the pattern established in her earlier works, beginning with the prophetic 'Et' and placing the current work in the context of her oeuvre - the sixth year after the completion of the LVM. To these descriptions, as we have come to expect, is added a statement of her age: 'cum sexaginta quinque annorum essem'.[87] Rather than pleading her intellectual incapacity, as she did in the parallel context of the Scivias preface, Hildegard

The emphasis on recognising the sinner's 'intention' brings Hildegard's thought into line with Abelard's ethical writings.

87. PL197.741.

here notes that the force of the vision made her ill so that she could scarcely complete the work in seven years: 'Et pro fragilitate corporis mei inde aegrotare inciperem. Quam visionem tandem per septem annos scribendo vix consummavi'.[88]

As in the earlier prefaces, Hildegard dates the events a second time, according to the year of the incarnation: 'Itaque in millesimo centesimo sexagesimo tertio Dominicae Incarnationis anno', adding, in a direct reference to the schism, 'pressura apostolicae sedis nondum sopita'. The same 'vox de coelo' addressing her in similar terms, ('O paupercula forma') notes her bodily afflictions but tells her to proclaim the 'mysteria Dei...ad utilitatem hominum'. Hildegard then goes on to describe how she obeyed God's command. She does not fail to link this vision with the previous ones by mentioning Volmar ('testificante homine illo, quem velut in prioribus visionibus mentionem faci...') or the actual manner of her vision.[89] She describes it in the following words:

> ...quoniam omnia quae a principio visionum mearum scripserem, vel quae post modum sciebam, in coelestibus mysteriis vigilans corpore et mente, interioribusque auribus audivi, et non in somnis, nec in exstasi, quemadmodum in prioribus visionibus meis praefata sum.[90]

Hildegard rounds the preface off with a further recollection of the voice: 'Iterum vocem de coelo sic me docentem audivi et dixit:Scribe ergo secunda me in modum hunc ', itself a recollection of the earlier

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88. ibid.

89. PL197.742.

90. Hildegard is apparently glossing over her experience described in the Vita (Appendix, 29) where she lost consciousness in the vision about the beginning of John's Gospel. This shows the strength of the exemplar.

preface endings.

Thus while the preface of the LDO closely resembles the beginnings of both LVM and Scivias, its formal structure is closer to the Scivias than the LVM. Possibly Hildegard recognised that the employment of dynamic visions, with partial explanations being given internally by the participants was an experiment which led to a good deal of confusion. Even the small extent to which these devices were used in the Scivias obscured the overall clarity of the structure and in the LDO this has been virtually eliminated, and with it any confusion of voices.

Here the visions, which are fewer in number (Bk1, 4; Bk2, 1; Bk3, 5), are described in their entirety before being explained. The explanations are all introduced by some such locution as : 'Et iterum audivi vocem de coelo mihi dicentem'.[91] As in the earlier works the voice has a tendency to refer to itself in a mixture of the third and first persons. So the opening phrase, 'Deus qui...' often follows closely on the introductory sentence just mentioned,[92] while biblical personages whose works are quoted are accorded a first person possessive, as in 'De hoc loquitur Isaias, servus meus dicens...'.[93] Sometimes the two modes are combined, as in the following sentence: '...et cum Deo permanebit, quemadmodum David servus meus in voluntate mea dicit...'[94] As a further example of the general

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91. PL197.744.

92. PL197.744, 755.

93. PL197.767.

94. PL197.772.

sharpening of focus already described, the LDO is less prodigal in its apostrophes. The LDO is addressed, in the first instance to Hildegard herself, with the ultimate audience left unspecified. Thus we find only two forms of address. The first is exemplified by the simple second person usage, as follows: 'Sed quod supradictum instrumentum in prioribus visionibus tuis in figura ovi denotatum est hoc ostendit, ...hic autem in rota circuito ...ostenditur',[95] or even more directly, 'Tu autem, o homo qui haec vides, intellige quod ad interiora animae ista etiam respiciant.'[96] The second form of address occurs in the structural markers for the ends of the visions. As in the earlier works, their reiteration helps to establish the form of the work, and strengthens Hildegard's claims to divine inspiration. Thus the visions of the first book are concluded by some form of the following:

> Omnis itaque homo qui Deum timet et diligit, verbis istis devotionem cordis sui aperiat, ac ea et ad salutem corporum et animarum hominum, non quidem ab homine, sed per me qui sum praelata sciat.[97]

Book Two, which consists of a single vision has the more succinct : 'Haec ergo fidelis fideliter intelligat, nec in his illum qui verax est contemnat'.[98] The visions of the third book use the following concluding sentence: 'Verba autem haec fideles devoto cordis affectu percipiant, quoniam per illumqui primus et novissimus est, ad utilitatem credentium edita sunt'.[99] The design of the LDO is carried

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95. PL197.755.

96. PL197.779.

97. Pl197.751-2.

98. PL197.945.

99. PL197.981, 988.

through to the end without the addition of new apologetic introductions for each of the separate books. However a feature found at the end of the Scivias is reintroduced and expanded at the conclusion of the LDO, in the form of a further divine guarantee and warning. It is preceded by the now familiar 'Et iterum de coelo vocem verba ista me docentem audivi', but this time the voice is to explain the position of his spokesperson, especially the role of her illnesses.[100] Another reason for this emphasis on bodily frailty and insecurity - the sense that '...nequaquam securitatem carnis in se habere possit, alioquin inspiratio Spiritus sancti in ea habitare non valaret' - may be that the work as a whole has been concerned with the relationship of the body to other parts of the divine economy.

The final anathema pronounced on those who presume to alter anything that Hildegard has written as a sin against the Holy Ghost is indeed striking:

> Unde nullus hominum tam audax sit, ut verbis hujus scripturae aliquid augendo apponat, vel minuendo auferat, ne de libro vitae, et de omni beatitudine quae sub sole est deleatur, nisi propter excribritatum litterarum, aut dictionum, quae per inspiratione Spiritus sancti simpliciter prolata sunt, fiat. Qui autem aliter praesumpserit, in spiritum sanctum peccat. Unde nec hicet nec in futuro saeculo illi remittetur.[101]

It would be possible to see this as a last-ditch attempt to bolster her authority against possible or actual detractors. But rather than a sign of weakness, it could be argued that the anathema represents the final proof of Hildegard's prophetic identification. Thus it was

100. That this topic was much on Hildegard's mind at the time is indicated by the autobiographical passages in Vita; see Appendix, 28, 45. Hildegard's health, always uncertain, appears to have deteriorated as she got older. Nor should we forget the aggravating effect of Vomar's death and the disputes over his successor.

101. PL197.1037-8.

only at the triumphant close of her last visionary work that she felt able to emulate the New Testament visionary par excellence, St John, who wrote in the Apocalypse:

> Contestor enim omni audienti verba prophetiae libri hujus: Si quis apposuerit ad haec, apponet Deus super illum plagas scriptas in libro suo. Et si quis diminuerit de verbis libri prophetiae hujus, auferet Deus partem ejus de libro vitae, et de civitate sancta, et de his qui scripta sunt in libro isto.[102]

Before leaving the subject of Hildegard's use of the prophetic persona in her writings, we may compare her methods with those of her neighbour and younger contemporary, Elisabeth of Schönau.[103] It is significant that the Scivias had just been completed before Elisabeth is said to have embarked on her visionary career in 1152 at the age of twenty-three.[104] Moreover, in the course of her first visionary work Elisabeth shows a clear progression from the disorganised accounts of ghosts, apparitions and bogeys encountered elsewhere in medieval writings, such as those of Guibert of Nogent and Caesarius of Heisterbach, in her earlier books, to visions having some kind of doctrinal or intellectual content. There seems little doubt that the development is due to Hildegard's influence, when we consider that her next book, in which the trend is further exemplified, is called Liber Viarum Dei and consists of a series of visions of a mountain.[105]

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102. Apoc. 22:18-20. It should be remembered that St John the Divine and St John the Evangelist were identified at this time.

103. See the articles of K. Koster in Archiv.f.mrh.K. 3 (1951) 243-315; and 4 (1952) 79-119. For her works see Visionen.

104. '...habens etatis annos viginti tres, in anno dominice incarnationis mill. CLII.' Visionen, 1.

105. See Visionen, 88-122. Cf. Scivias, 7: 'Vidi quasi montem magnum ferreum...'.

However, the differences between Hildegard and Elisabeth are even more revealing than the similarities.

First, whereas Hildegard was called by God to write down what she saw, the Liber visionem was elicited by Elisabeth's brother Egbert: 'Petis a me frater, et ad hoc venisti, ut enarrem tibi misericordias domini, quas secundum beneplacitum gratie sue operari dignatus est in me'.[106] Elisabeth's words are further mediated by translation, since in his preface Egbert appears to say that Elisabeth recounted her visions to him in a mixture of Latin and German: '...ut ubi erant latina verba angeli immutata relinquerem, ubi vero teutonica erant, in latinum transferrem, prout expressius potui'.[107] The last passage indicates a further difference between Hildegard and Elisabeth's method. Hildegard's explicator was always God, under one of his many descriptions, while Elisabeth's mentor was of a lower order, usually an angel, but sometimes a named saint.[108]

If we turn to Elisabeth's first book of visions, we find echoes of the prophetic dating of Hildegard's works but with an important difference. Since her account is transmuted into the third person it loses its immediate prophetic force - 'Fuit in diebus Eugenii pape...habens etatis annos viginti tres...visitata est a domino...'[109] So too, the opening of her reported description of the

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106. Visionen, 2.

107. ibid., 1. Indeed it suggests that the angel, spoke to Elisabeth both in Latin and German.

108. e.g. St Benedict or one or other of the eleven thousand virgins.

109. ibid., 1.

actual vision is reminiscent of Hildegard's style, when Elisabeth says: 'Factum est in die sancto Pentecosten...', but here the similarity ends. Hildegard, by dating her major visions according to the year of the Incarnation places them in the broad sweep of salvation history while Elisabeth uses it to introduce a welter of visions, all described according to the liturgical calendar, with scant regard for the year. So we find, to take but a few examples: 'ad festum beati Maximini'; '...cum inchoatur missa de beata virgine domina nostra, sabbatum enim erat'; 'Eodem dei ad vesperam... ', or even simply 'post prandium'.[110] The temporal indicators have nothing to do with prophetic claims, but rather reflect the psychological fact that Elisabeth's visions were closely connected with the rituals of the church and followed the liturgical calendar. At such times she was wont to fall into an ecstacy, another point of difference between her and Hildegard.

Elisabeth's second work, the LVD, although it bears an even closer resemblance to Hildegard's work is once again influenced by her different psychology. Whereas Hildegard's visions appear to have been apprehended instantaneously and remembered for a long time, Elisabeth seems to have received hers serially, often in response to particular questions fed to her by Egbert or others.[111] Once again, the work is prefaced and mediated by her brother Egbert.

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110. ibid., 5; 5; 6; 7.

111. e.g. 'iam appropinquante die festo Pentecostes' and 'Vidi rursus alia visione in sollempnitate Pentecostes...': ibid., 88; 'Rursus in octava pentecostes...': ibid., 89. For examples of the questions see, ibid., 67: 'Questionem michi proposuit frater quidam habentem formam huiusmodi...' and 103: 'Rogavit me germanus meus, ut sciscitarer ab angelo...'.

While these comparisons confirm the special care Hildegard took to indicate the prophetic nature of her writings, they raise the question of the necessity for such an approach. For judged by the surviving manuscripts Elisabeth's work was much better received in the Middle Ages than that of Hildegard. There are several explanations for this apparent paradox. The first is that Elisabeth's work was mediated from the beginning by her brother, and so she never had to venture into traditional male preserves. Further, although Hildegard claimed to be 'paupercula forma' she showed she was not, by insisting on the retention of her bodily senses and the intellectual nature of her visions. Elisabeth, who also described herself in terms of excessive humility, by her behaviour and the nature of her visions might well have reinforced a belief in the inherent inferiority and weakness of women. Moreover, the content of her visions was not such as would challenge male intellectual supremacy. As for popularity, it is not hard to see why her much more accessible works would have been more popular than Hildegard's even if there were no extra- literary reasons for monasteries to acquire a copy of the history of the eleven thousand virgins.[112] Compared with this, the lives of St Rupert and St Disibod were of very limited interest.

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112. According to legend, St Ursula was a British princess who went on a pilgrimage to Rome, accompanied by 11,000 virgins. On the way back, the entire party was massacred by the Huns at Cologne. Increased interest in the story was occasioned by the discovery in 1106 of an early burial ground near the church of St Ursula at Cologne, containing numerous remains together with some inscriptions. Inevitably the discovery led to a great traffic in relics. Elisabeth's story authenticated such relics and explained, for instance, the presence of some male martyrs along with the eleven thousand.

# CHAPTER VI: THE USES OF PROPHECY (II)

> Non est propheta sine honore, nisi in patria sua et in domo sua.
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> Matthew 13:57.

In the last chapter I discussed the self-conscious use Hildegard made of her prophetic persona to authenticate and justify her writings. The question now to be examined is whether Hildegard only used that persona in a literary context, or whether it informed other aspects of her life, especially her dealings with other people. Part of the answer to this question has been anticipated in Chapter III, where I looked at Hildegard's correspondence in order to ascertain contemporary attitudes to her. There it was found that the role of personal adviser, in which she was cast by many of her correspondents, depended on their belief that she was privy to the 'mysteria Dei'. Moreover, the field of reference of this term was very broadly conceived, and could include matters of abstract theology, as well as questions of personal salvation. Hildegard herself encouraged this range of enquiries, by referring all her answers, of whatever type, to the same source - 'the living light' - under any of its many descriptions.

Dronke, in making a distinction between the eschatological prophecies found in the major works and Hildegard's 'pretence of having clairvoyant powers' for answering letters seeking personal

reassurance about future salvation, indicates a bias towards a modern conception of prophecy.[1] For Hildegard, prophetic knowledge embraced past, present and future, both universally, as in the progress of Ecclesia, and individually, in the fate of each of its members.[2] If by 'popular concessions', Dronke is referring to the personal interest and responsibility for individuals attributed to God, and transmitted through Hildegard, it is a popular concession as old as Christianity, and one which distinguishes it from other world religions, such as Buddhism.[3]

i. Exorcism and preaching.

Among Hildegard's letters of advice discussed in chapter III, there is a particular subject which deserves further study. We read in the third book of the Vita: 'Inter cetera autem uirtutum insignia data est a domino sancte uirgini ab obsessis corporibus demones eiciendi gracia'.[4] As it stands this looks like the attribution to Hildegard

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1. Cf. WW, 192-3 and Problemata, 126, where he discusses a letter from Ms B: 'the intellectual and imaginative tautness of Hildegard's writing seems to give way to popular concessions. Despite her semblance of denial, in this letter she puts up a pretence of having clairvoyant powers. In Hildegard's visionary trilogy...the prophetic element is eschatological only'.

2. Apart from being deducible from her practice, Hildegard describes her belief in the letter to Guibert of Gembloux, see above p.152(the 'scripture, sermones, virtutes, et quedam opera hominum' that Hildegard sees in her visions may be compared to the kinds of things Prudentia saw reflected in the mirror given her by Faith, in Alan of Lille's Anticlaudianus. Here God's secrets included the differing fates of men, not just the truths of revealed religion.

3. Cf. Matthew 10:29; Luke 12:6.

4. Appendix, 36.

of yet another of the charismatic gifts.[5] However, when all the evidence concerning Hildegard's liberation of Sigewise is taken into account, it appears that Hildegard's part was more that of a consultant in, rather than a practitioner of, exorcism.[6]

Thus the first letter from the Abbot of Brauweiler does not praise her as an exorcist, but in more general terms:

> Nam in uobis fulget opus non humanum sed diuinum, gracia precedens donum prepollens, quod non dictat humana ratio, sed quod procedit ex fonte lucidissimo.[7]

For this reason, he writes, 'a uobis bonum consilium recipere non dubitamus'.[8] Indeed, the suffering woman herself, or rather the devil obsessing her, is claimed to have revealed that her liberation would only be effected 'per uirtutem uestre contemplationis et magnitudinem diuine reuelationis'. Any further doubt about the way in which the abbot thinks Hildegard might help is dispelled by the closing words of the letter where he writes: 'Quicuid ergo deus de his uobis inspirauerit seu uisione reueleuerit nobis sanctitas uestra litteris designare studeat obnixe et humiliter deprecamur.'[9]

For Hildegard's response to this call for help we have two important sources: an autobiographical fragment and her letter to Gedolphus. Both indicate that her initial reaction was to consult her usual source of information (in the letter referred to as 'ill[e] qui est')

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5. For the charismatic gifts see 1 Cor. 12.

6. See above p. 37.

7. Appendix, 39.

8. ibid.

9. Appendix, 40.

which provided her with some general information about devils and the reason for the difficulty in routing this specific type.[10] Hildegard's answer does not remain theoretical, for she goes on to provide minute instructions for a process of exorcism involving 'septem sacerdotes boni testimonii et quos uite meritum commendat', who are to beat the woman lightly with rods, while intoning various formulae.[11] The demon is itself conjured, in terms not unlike those Hildegard had used to address some of her more conventional clients: 'Audi maligne et stulte spiritus...uerba hec non per hominem premeditata sed per illum qui est et qui uiuit manifestata...'.[12] When the process had been duly carried out, the woman was freed from the spirit, but only for a short time, for in the midst of the general celebrations, the demon returned and reentered the woman whom 'nunc acrius quam prius fatigat'.[13] The exorcism was tried again, but the only response from the spirit was an affirmation that the presence of Hildegard was necessary for its departure. The woman then was finally sent to Hildegard, with a letter explaining what had happened.

Although Hildegard was credited with the cure of Sigewise, when we read her account with care it seems that she did not attempt further

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10. See Appendix, 37 for autobiographical fragment; for the letter to Gedolphus: 40f.

11. Appendix, 40-41.

12. Appendix, 41.

13. Appendix, 42.

14. It is possible to speculate about the nature of Sigewise's affliction. From hints dropped in the account it seems that it was characterised by episodes of obscenity and blasphemy. The intriguing manner in which Sigewise was able to obtain Hildegard's personal

exorcism but involved the woman in other kinds of therapy.[14] Thus she was taken into the community, both physically, being lodged, not without misgivings, in the sisters' dormitory, and metaphorically, in that the local population laboured for her with fasting, prayers, alms and bodily mortifications. Sigewise was even allowed to address the people on religious matters, although Hildegard took care that nothing unorthodox was said.[15] The process of recovery reached its dramatic climax on Holy Sunday when the font was being consecrated, a rite which included a general exorcism of the water.[16] On this occasion, Hildegard writes: '...inmundus spiritus per uerecundiam femine cum egestione horribiliter egressus est et ipsa liberata est'.[17] This time the cure was permanent, and as we learn from a letter from Cologne, Sigewise joined Hildegard's community.[18] Such a widely publicised cure could only have increased Hildegard's reputation for dealing with cases of mental affliction.[19] So we read in the Vita of five other cases of possession/obsession, leaving aside post mortem cures, including one apparently of an overscrupulous nun.[20] Yet it

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attention ('Crumplegard'), as well as her gradual integration into the Rupertsberg community, suggests the possibility of a thwarted vocation. All we know of Sigewise's background is that she was a young noblewoman, held in affection by the clergy of Cologne.

15. Appendix, 43

16. See A. Franz, Die Kirchlichen Benediktionen im Mittelalter (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1909) esp. II, 545f.

17. Appendix, 44.

18. PL197.258B-D.

19. Widely publicised judging by the correspondence it involved, the length of the process and the numbers of people participating in the cure.

20. Appendix, 47. This proportion seems higher than average; cf. Finucane, op. cit., 145-6.

should be remembered that this, the best documented case of exorcism, which incorporates more detail than Theodoric's conventional accounts, only came to Hildegard because of her reputation for knowing divine secrets, rather than (pace Theodoric) for possessing a separate charismatic gift of exorcism.

Some of the other aspects of Hildegard's unusual and self-appointed ministry can also be seen to depend upon a general acceptance of her role as prophet. Her remarkable preaching tours, for instance, should be seen in this light. Although we can barely reconstruct the outlines of such journeys and their chronology, they were only undertaken once Hildegard's reputation had been well-established by the Scivias and LVM. The subject of this last piece may have suggested, either to Hildegard herself, or those who were acquainted with her works, her suitability as a monastic trouble-shooter - one who could settle internal organisational problems as well as giving advice and warnings on a wider scale. The initial impetus for such visits is not clear. Possibly Hildegard was asked to intervene, or, on being asked for advice felt it best to deliver it in person. Her account of her first trip in the autobiographical passages of the Vita merely states: 'Ad alia quoque loca congregationum iter arripui ac uerba que deus iussit ibi explanaui'.[21] Later, Hildegard describes her fourth preaching tour as follows:

> Inter hec in uera uisione michi ostensum fuit quod quasdam congregationes spiritualium hominum uirorum ac mulierum in uiserem eisque uerba que deus michi ostenderet aperte manifestarem.[22]

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21. Appendix, 21-2. Hildegard has just described her trip to Disibodenberg to settle matters between the monasteries.

22. Appendix, 45.

Theodoric gives a list of twenty-one places Hildegard visited, 'spiritu diuino non modo acta sed coacta'.[23] He makes special mention of Cologne, Trier, Metz, Würzburg and Bamberg as places where she preached 'clero et populo.'[24] Possibly Theodoric had independent information about Hildegard's preaching tours; if not, like Stilting and Führkötter he would have had to depend on hints from the correspondence. He is, however quite clear on the general purpose of such visits. They were to make known '...que ad utilitatem animarum pertinebant iuxta ea que ei deus revelauerat...'.[25]

So far we have been dealing with matters where Hildegard's intervention, advice or cooperation was apparently actively solicited. All such cases involved, either implicitly or explicitly, a recognition of her prophetic powers. More importantly, Hildegard, in responding to such requests, always made the source of her knowledge and power apparent. She is not only performing God's will, but speaking his very words.

ii. Adversary situations.

But there were other, less gratifying occasions, on which Hildegard, rather than being in the position of giving advice or telling others what they should do, found herself in conflict with her ecclesiastical superiors. We shall now see how Hildegard deployed her prophetic

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23. Appendix, 35.

24. ibid.

25. Appendix, 36.

persona on such occasions, and with what results.

The first recorded difference of opinion that Hildegard had with those in authority over her was when she expressed a desire to remove her convent from Disibodenberg to Rupertsberg in 1147/8.[26] This plan, coming as it did after the papal recognition of her work at the Synod of Trier, but before the completion of the Scivias, belongs to the earliest phase when her prophetic career was not fully established. It is perhaps not surprising then, that the abbot and monks of Disibodenberg were not immediately persuaded by her claim, even going so far as to suggest that she '...quadam uanitate deceptam esse...'[27] In the face of this denial of her ultimate authority for the action she had planned, Hildegard once more took to her bed.[28] It seems clear, however, that her work on the Scivias came to a standstill and this circumstance, together no doubt with the more remarkable aspects of her illness, forced the monks to reconsider.[29] It should also be noted that Hildegard had enlisted impressive lay and ecclesiastical supporters in the Marchioness of Stade and Archbishop Henry of Mainz. But if, at the time, the way in which Hildegard obtained permission to move to Rupertsberg did not represent a clear cut victory for Hildegard as prophet, in retrospect it could be, and indeed was,

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26. See above, p.

27. Appendix, 16.

28. ibid. She had already been prostrated when she failed to declare to the monks God's plan for the move: '...passa sum quia non manifestaui uisionem que michi ostensa fuit quod de loco in quo deo oblata fueram in alium cum puellis meis moueri deberem.' ibid., 16. Whether this was fortuitous or unconsciously willed will be considered in the next chapter.

29. Appendix, 16.

considered to have helped establish her prophetic claims.

In Hildegard's next conflict over the nun Richardis of Stade, we find her mother, the marchioness, and Henry of Mainz unexpectedly ranged on the opposing side, together with Hartwig of Bremen and, ultimately, the Pope. The facts of the matter seem fairly uncomplicated; the emotions engendered by them less so. Richardis, it will be remembered, was the nun who stood by Hildegard during both the writing of the Scivias and the difficulties experienced by the new foundation of Rupertsberg. The nature of the assistance Richardis gave in the writing of the Scivias is not described by Hildegard, although it seems likely, as Herwegen suggested, that she might have acted as amenuensis when Hildegard was too ill to write for herself.[30]

Whatever the nature of the assistance, Hildegard resented its untimely removal when Richardis was elected Abbess of the Saxon foundation of Bassum, in the diocese of Bremen, whose incumbent happened to be her brother, Hartwig. Hildegard's first letter in the exchange is to Richardis' mother. It is chiefly remarkable for the fact that it is written in her own persona, and not as the word of God. The difference is immediately obvious in the opening words:

> Obsecro te et admoneo, ne ita animam meam conturbes, ut amaras lacrimas de oculis meis educas, et cor meum diris vulneribus satities propter amantissimas filias meas Richardam et Adelheidem'[31]

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30. 'Collaborateurs', 306. An illustration from the Lucca manuscript of the LDO (Lucca. Bibl. gov. 1942) shows Hildegard noting down the divine revelation with a stylus on wax tablets, while Volmar busies himself with pen and parchment. A female figure, presumably Richardis, stands behind Hildegard with folded hands, possibly intended to be a representation of moral support.

31. Haug, 64. Adelheid was actually the marchioness' granddaughter. See Echtheit, 138-141.

She has no hesitation, on the other hand, in declaring that the decison to make the girls abbesses '...certe, certe, certe non est a deo, nec est cum salute animarum earum.' The marchioness is warned that she may bring ruin on her daughters' souls and sorrow to herself if she persists in this course. The conventional ending contains a sting in the last words: 'Deus illuminet et confortet sensum et animam tuam in hoc brevi tempore, quo victura es.'[32]

The question of impropriety in the election of the two must be addressed. Although Adelheid was extremely young - possibly not even professed at the time - Richardis herself must have been at least twenty-eight, and, on Hildegard's own admission, an exemplary nun. Of course the proximity of Bassum to Bremen, where Hartwig was in contention with Henry the Lion may have suggested to Hildegard, among others, that considerations of realpolitik had entered into the case. Yet when Hildegard, in her letter to Henry of Mainz alludes to simoniacs, I do not think that she is suggesting Richardis' election bears this taint, or at least only in the broadest sense, where any election against the will of God renders its participants suspect.[33]

This letter is a reply to the archbishop, who had taken the precaution of writing to Hildegard to announce that messengers had come from Saxony to escort Richardis to her new post and that they had his backing. Apparently he had formed the impression that Hildegard

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32. ibid.

33. cf. Hildegard's letter to Hartwig. 'Quod si quaesierit, in inquieta mente volens magister esse, potestatem magis voluptate appetens, quam voluntatem Dei inspiciens, lupus rapax in persona sua est, ...sed ibi Simonia est.' PL197.163 and Haug, 60-1.

might not relinquish her companion gracefully and added the warning:

> Quod si feceris gratiam nostram deinceps plus quam hactenus experta fueris senties; sin autem, eadem tibi iterum fortius mandabimus, nec cessabimus dum praecepta nostra in hoc facto compleas.[34]

Hildegard's reply adopts from the outset a most uncompromising tone. She opens the letter with the words: 'Perspicuus fons, qui non est fallax, sed justus...' thus indicating that it is God's word, rather than her own. The message she has to convey is that Richardis' election has no standing in the eyes of God since it is the work of 'conniventi audacia ignorantium cordium'.[35] There follows a warning to bishops ('o pastores') from 'Spiritus dei in zelo' about the perversion of offices.[36] A change from the plural to the singular however, signals the fact that the last part of the letter is addressed by 'ille qui est', specifically to Henry. It contains a strongly worded, but rather non-specific rebuke:

> Tu autem surge, quia dies breves sunt, et reminiscere Nabuchodonosor, cecidit et quod corona ipsius periit. Et similis alii ceciderunt, qui se temere in coelum exaltaverunt.[37]

In this letter, in contrast to the one to Richardis' mother, Hildegard makes no personal appeals. In adopting the prophetic persona she insists on her divine source three times in the space of a brief letter, and mingles judgments about the specific case with warnings

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34. PL197.156.

35. PL197.156 has 'conviventi', Dronke's emendation, WW, 308, seems reasonable.

36. This is the imputation of simony which Dronke notes, WW, 155, however it seems more general than particular.

37. PL197.157.

which pertain to a wider state of affairs.

Yet this tactic was apparently unsuccessful, since the next letter in the correspondence is one from Hildegard to Hartwig of Bremen asking him to arrange for Richardis' return.[38] Here she puts the chief blame on 'quidam horribilis homo', apparently Abbot Cuno of Disibodenberg, Richardis' mother and Count Herman of Stahleck, rather than the archbishop, recognising, perhaps that he was subject to family pressures. In the letter formal prophetic indicators are absent. The letter begins: 'O laudabilis persona', and continues the tone of (qualified) intimacy as she writes: 'O care, multum est mihi amabilis anima tua pro genere tuo'.[39] Yet Hildegard's conviction remains unshaken, that she knows God's will in the matter and that everyone else is acting against it. Thus Cuno is castigated in 'obcaecato sensu suo, et in ignorantia sua in haec gesta et in tam magnam temertitatem caecae mentis', and Hartwig's mother and Count Herman of Stahleck for disregarding her words.

Indeed, Hildegard suggests that God's plan for Richardis was a perpetuation of the status quo, and that her destiny was to remain as a collaborator and support for Hildegard.[40] On the other hand, she does seem willing to countenance some other position for Richardis

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38. Haug, 60-1.

39. There are several levels of ambiguity here. Both Dronke's translation, 'I greatly cherish your soul more than your family', and mine, 'Your soul is greatly pleasing to me on account of your family' depend on whether she is including Richardis with the rest of her family. However Hildegard seems to use 'pro' in the sense of my translation later in the letter.

40. 'Si filia nostra quieta mansisset, dominus praepararet illam ad voluntatem gloriae suae': Haug, 60.

('quia electionem dei non praetereo, nec eam contradico, ubicumque fuerit...') as long as she does not retain the present one, and returns forthwith. The closing words of the letter suggest that Hildegard's goodwill towards Hartwig is only provisional since she writes : 'Deus det tibi de rore coeli benedicitionem et omnes chori angelorum benedicant tibi, si audieris me, famulam dei, et si perfeceris voluntatem dei in hac causa.' Having failed to get her own way either by personal appeals or declarations of God's will, Hildegard wrote to the Pope.[41] It is unfortunate that Hildegard's letter to the Pope does not survive, since it would have been interesting to see what line she took with him. Clearly, however, it was a dispute in which the Pope wished not to involve himself, as his proviso about whether Richardis could adequately observe the Rule at Bassum is a mere face-saving device, effectively putting the ball back into the archbishop's court.[42]

The next letter, written by Hildegard 'Richardae virgini', is a fascinating reflection of Hildegard's struggle to salvage something from her apparent defeat.[43] In language which is, for Hildegard, intensely personal, meditative introspection alternates with lamentation.[44] Yet the issues at stake do not arise simply from the conflict of 'transcendent love and love of the heart', as Dronke puts

41. Actually the sequence of the letters is debatable since it depends on internal evidence. So the letter to the Pope could have been written before the letter to Hartwig about Henry's refusal to change his mind. The letter to Hartwig may have been written when Richardis passed to his jurisdiction.

42. See above, p 32

43. Haug, 61.

44. This is the only letter in which she refers to herself by name.

it in his analysis of the letter.[45]

In the face of sustained lay and ecclesiastical opposition, and the fait accompli of Richardis' removal, Hildegard seems, at least momentarily, to have doubted her apprehension of the will of God. And since this was one of the wellsprings of Hildegard's way of dealing with the world, such a loss was even more threatening than that of Richardis. So we find in this letter Hildegard replacing her old certainty that the election was contrary to God's will, by the new one, that in fact it was contrived by God with the deeper purpose of indicating to Hildegard the vanity of earthly attachments. The logic of this situation demands that Hildegard reject such transitory affections, placing her gaze '...in deum ut aquila in sole oculum ponit', rather than in human nobility, '...quae deficit sicut flos cadit.'

Yet this bleak analysis of the situation is clearly at odds with her experience, and her feeling that there was something redeeming about her love for Richardis, as she writes: 'Amavi nobilitatem morum tuorum et sapientiam et castitatem et tuam animam et omnem vitam tuam'. Hildegard was obviously experiencing some of the paradoxes of human and divine love which received their definitive resolution in De Spiritualis Amicitia, by the Cistercian, Ailred of Rievaulx.[46]
Indeed, the reasons she gives for her attachment to Richardis were just those which were thought by the Cistercians to form the proper basis for spiritual friendship. It was, perhaps, fortunate for

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45. WW, 156-9.

46. See S. Flanagan, 'Spiritualis Amicitia in a twelfth-century Convent?' Parergon 29 (1981) 15-21.

Hildegard that she evidently knew nothing of such a theology of friendship. If she had, it would have been even harder to explain her failure to prevail. As it was, by localising the fault within herself, and limiting it to a particular aspect of her behaviour, she was able to salvage her general position - that of God's confidant.[47]

It was not long after this point of adjustment had been reached that Hildegard received another letter from Hartwig, announcing the sudden death of his sister. In it he assures Hildegard that Richardis had made a good death, having died

> sancte et pie confessam... et inunctam oleo sancto post confessionem...seque Domino per matrem et Joannem committens, et signo crucis tertio signato, Trinitatem et unitatem confitens in perfecta fide Dei, et spe et charitate...[48].

Moreover, he adds that Richardis shed many tears for her former cloister and had been on the point of returning to Hildegard when prevented by death.[49]

Hildegard's reply has been variously described as 'a superb flight of magnanimity, sublimation and forgiveness' and 'einem Schreiben, das zu ihren schönsten Briefen zählt'.[50] At the risk of sounding churlish, it might be pointed out that this generosity only becomes apparent when Richardis' death effectively puts her out of reach of

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47. Compare the reaction of the monks of Brauweiler who thought their own sinfulness had jeopardised the success of the exorcism of Sigewise.

48. PL197.161-2

49. i.e. for a visit rather than for good. See Dronke, WW, 308 and Flanagan, op. cit., 20.

50. Dronke, WW, 159 and Führkötter, Briefwechsel, 99.

the contending parties and justifies Hildegard's original stand. There is no thought here of Hildegard's having been wrong in her attachment to Richardis, rather: '...plena charitas in anima mea fuit ad ipsam, quoniam vivens lux in fortissima visione docuit meipsam amare'. The vision showed Richardis, 'in virginea virga in sanctissimo ordine societatem', and thus Hildegard had been justifiably worried by the possibility that she could have been seduced from such high destiny by the worldly honours thrust upon her by her family connections. Now Hildegard sees Richardis' death as proof of God's special favour: 'Sed Deus illam plus dilexit. Idcirco noluit Deus amicam suam dare inimico amatori, id est mundo'. Because of what has happened, Hildegard was able to dispense with the idea that God's separating her from Richardis was intended as a rebuke. Now it seemed patently due to the malice of the 'antiquus sepens' who wished to deprive Richardis of the blessed place prepared for her 'per altam generositastem humanitatis'.

In other words, as Hildegard had maintained throughout, except for her moment of doubt in the letter to Richardis, the appointment was a perversion of God's will, and she alone had recognised this. Such a vindication of her belief may go some way towards explaining why she was able to be magnanimous to Hertwig: 'Unde et ego abjicio dolorem illum de corde meo quem mihi fecisti in hac filia mea'.[51] Once again she was able to draw her prophetic mantle about her.

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51. PL197.163D. But not really to Richardis. The letter does not suggest to me, as Dronke writes, that 'Hildegard had arrived at a comprehending acceptance of the young woman who had wanted to carve out her own life rather than remain a disciple': WW, 159 . Hence the note in the Autobiography is not as troubling as Dronke thinks, or not in the way he thinks.

Since Hildegard seems to have identified Abbot Cuno as her chief antagonist in the struggle involving Richardis, it was probably with some trepidation that she received God's command in 1155 to make Rupertsberg financially independent of Disibodenberg.[52] Hildegard describes what happened in the autobiographical fragment in the second book of the Vita:

> Uidi in uisione et docta et coacta sum ut prelatis meis reuelarem quod locus noster cum suis pertinenciis a loco in quo deo oblata fueram absoluendus esset.[53]

As we have already seen, the usual way in which Hildegard was compelled to do God's will, in spite of misgivings, was by falling ill, and recovering when she had made up her mind to perform the task put upon her. According to Godfrey, who described these transactions in the first book of the Vita:

> Siquidem hec ipsa uirgo dum reuelatione intima cognosceret pro tali negocio eundum sibi esse ab idem cenobium et...trepidatione quadam detineretur diuine castigationis flagello tacta pene languit usque ad mortem.[54]

Her prayers in the chapel, her demand to be placed on a horse, and her subsequent recovery on the ride to Disibodenberg may be viewed either as Godfrey's hagiographical embroidery, a recovery from a psychosomatic illness, or a canny exploitation of the dramatic possibilities of the situation. Further details emerge from Hildegard's letter to her spiritual daughters describing the

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52. See above, p

53. Appendix, 19.

54. Appendix, 8.

55. PL197.1065. The account forms the beginning of her explanation of the Athanasian creed.

foundation of Rupertsberg.[55] It includes the words of the divinely inspired speech by which she secured the financial and administrative independence of Rupertsberg. In it she likens the abbot, in his opposition, to the Amalekites and Antiochus, the despoiler of the temple, and as well as the sons of Belial, for trying to deprive them of their provost.[56] In this letter she claims that her ultimatum met with immediate agreement. However in the Vita fragment she writes that nothing could be done at the time because of the abbot's fatal illness who 'etiam post paucos dies uitam finiuit' and that the business was finalised by his successor and the Archbishop of Mainz.[57] It is possible that a less formal agreement had been reached with Cuno, which was subsequently ratified by Helinger and Arnold of Mainz in 1158.[58]

This campaign resulted in a more clear-cut victory for Hildegard, who conducted it, as before, on the grounds of her prophetic knowledge of God's will. The illness which preceded her decision to make a stand may have contributed to her success, as well as the fact that this time she produced evidence, in the form of her prophetic speech to the monks, for her claims, rather than depending on the bald assertion of her privileged knowledge. The less formidable nature of her opposition (her old monastery, as opposed to powerful lay and ecclesiastical dignitaries) and the timing of her petition (when Cuno was no longer fully in control) may also have helped to secure her ends.

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56. PL197.1065-6.

57. Appendix, 19.

58. See above, p.11.

Yet relations were not entirely cordial between the two establishments, and it seems that the monks never wholly forgave Hildegard her defection.[59] As late as 1170 there are still indications of this in Helenger's request for her to write the life of St Disibod: '...quoniam ex debito debetis, quia cum sororibus vestris a nobis quamvis corpore, sed non spiritu, ut veraciter speramus et scimus, egressa estis'.[60] Moreover, when at last the charter was invoked to secure appointment of a new provost, after Volmar's death in 1173/4, the abbot and monks proved uncooperative. There is a letter extant from Hildegard to Pope Alexander III which puts her case before him.[61]

Since the case depended on a traditional, although unexercised right, backed by a charter, Hildegard was content to present the facts

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59. There is an exchange between Cuno and Hildegard (PL197.203A-204C) which secures for him a version of her sequence for St Disibod, as well as some acerbic criticism. Prior Arnold (PL197.373C-374A) sends a letter begging her for spiritual assistance, 'pro antiqua et justa familiaritate' and is favoured with a visionary admonition (PL197.374B-376A). Another letter (Pitra, 529.), probably sent to Cuno, complains: 'Quidam de turba fratrum tuorum super me, sicut super nigerrimum avem, et ut super horribilem bestiam fremebant, atque arcus suos contra me intendebant quatenus ab ipsis (non) surgerem. Sed in veritate scio, quod Deus in mysteriis suis me de loco illo movit, quoniam in verbis et in miraculis ipsius anima mea ita commota fuisset, quasi ante tempus moritura esset, si illic permansissem.' Even the letter from Helenger (PL197.204-5), although quite abject in recognising his shortcomings, does not entirely deflect Hildegard's sense of grievance. She writes: 'Ego autem paupercula video in te nigerrimum ignem contra nos accensum'(PL197.205).

60. PL197.382.

61. PL197.154C-155C. Hildegard apparently went over the head of her archbishop in this appeal. Mainz was at the time held by the schismatic Christian of Buch, although Conrad of Wittlesbach did not renounce his claim to it until the Treaty of Venice in August, 1177.

without calling upon her prophetic credentials.[62] Rather than seeking to coerce the Pope, she humbles herself:

> Nunc, o mitissime Pater, ego et sorores meae genua nostra coram paterna pietate sua flectimus, orantes ut digneris paupertatem paupercula formae respicere'[63]

She describes the right of election as something 'quam semper habuimus, de qua semper magna cautela providendum nobis est, ne aliquatenus nobis tollatur'. Instead of relying on the divine will, she points out the practical necessity of electing 'timoratos and religiosos', with the unstated assumption that the nuns themselves are the best persons to judge this. If they are not able to obtain their choices, she warns, 'religio spiritualis omnino in nobis destrueretur'. Next, Hildegard briefly restates her request - that the Pope help them either 'electionem nostram obtineamus', or ensure that they are free to seach for others beyond Disibodenberg 'qui nos secundum Deum in utilitatem nostram procurent'. She closes her letter with a further plea for a sympathetic hearing, 'inclina ergo supplicationibus nostris aures tuae pietatis' and a desire for his eternal felicity.

And indeed this was sufficient. In his reply, the Pope empowers Wezelin, Hildegard's nephew, the Provost of St Andreas in Cologne, to call the parties together and decide the matter. He adds that if, for some reason, the provost of the nuns' choice cannot be obtained from Disibodenberg, then they be allowed to choose a substitute, from somewhere else. In the end, Helenger sent the monk Godfrey, who wrote

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62. The fact that it was also ratified by the Emperor's charter may not have proved so compelling in the circumstances.

63. PL197.155.

the first part of the Vita. When he died within two years of taking up his position, Hildegard seems to have taken the second option and found her provosts where she could.[64] So we learn from Guibert of Gembloux' letter to Radulf of Villers that there were two provosts when he came to Rupertsberg in 1177, Hildegard's brother and another member of the Mainz clergy who died shortly after his arrival, leaving him with sole charge of the affairs of the monastery and the position of Hildegard's secretary.[65]

The last confrontation Hildegard had with her ecclesiastical superiors was also the most serious. For reasons explained earlier no mention is made of this occurrence in the Vita and the sequence of events has to be reconstructed from letters and the Acta.[66] The trouble arose over the burial at Rupertsberg of a 'mortuum juvenem' who had at one time been excommunicated.[67] A few days after the burial, the prelates of Mainz, claiming that the sentence had not in fact been lifted, ordered the body to be disinterred and cast out of the cemetery, on pain of interdict. Hildegard believed that the man

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64. And not without some difficulty. In the interregnum between Volmar and Guibert of Gembloux, Hildegard obtained help from Wezelin, Ludwig of St Eucharius, her brother Hugo and others. See 'Collaborateurs', 308ff.

65. Pitra, 578: 'Quo ad sua revertente, et e vestigio germanus ille domnae meae Hildegardis, brevi cribratus febre, defungitur; et alter socius ejus extrema, de qua non adjecit resurgere, comprehensis infirmitte tecto recipitur; mihique soli magna pars curae monasterii imponitur.'

66. The letters are : Hildegard to Christian, PL197.159-60, and his reply PL197.160-1. For the letter 'Ad Praelatos..' see PL197.218f. A better text is found in Ms B, f54r-56r. Dronke prints a version of this in WW, 313-15, much abbreviated.

67. PL197.159.

had died reconciled to the church and cites the manner of his death and burial: '...confessi, inuncti et communicati, et sine contradictione sepulti'.[68]

Faced with their decree, however, she looked 'ad verum lumen ut soleo' and was confirmed in her fear that to do as her superiors commanded would be highly dangerous.[69] Rather than comply she concealed the grave.[70] Then, although still believing that the moral initiative was hers, she complied with the terms of the interdict, which meant that the nuns had to refrain from singing the divine office and from 'participatione dominici corporis', a heavy deprivation.[71]

After suffering this regime for some time, Hildegard felt compelled to take further action by appealing to the prelates of Mainz to restore the sacraments to her convent. The letter 'Ad praelatos..' no doubt contains the substance of what she said.[72] Failing in this effort to sway them, Hildegard returned home 'plena lacrymis'.[73] At this point Hildegard's friends took a hand. Philip of Cologne went

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68. WW, 314; cf. her letter to Christian PL197.159C: 'ante mortem suam ab anno diu absolutum, et omnibus Christianae fidei sacramentis munitum...' and the reference to the public nature of the burial, including a procession from Bingen.

69. WW, 314.

70. Information contained in the Acta, see above, pp. 10-11.

71. They were allowed only 'illum tantum legentes remisse': WW, 314.

72. She writes in her letter to Christian: 'In vera visione animae meae a summo judice...pondere gravissime infirmitatis coacta, ad praelatos nostros in Moguntinam veni et verba quae in vero lumine videram, ut ipsa mihi praecepit, scripta repraesenatavi...', PL197.160A.

73. ibid.

to Mainz, taking with him a certain soldier who claimed to have been absolved at the same time as the young man buried at Rupertsberg, and the priest who had loosed them both.[74]

Philip also took it upon himself to lift the interdict, pending Christian's return from Rome.[75] However, soon after this, a letter came from Christian in Rome confirming the interdict and Hildegard felt bound to comply once more.[76] This was the occasion of her second appeal to Christian.[77]

It was this appeal that finally obtained results. In a very diplomatic and conciliatory letter Christian heaped praises on Hildegard, noting especially: 'Haec manifesta sanctae conversationis tuae indicia et stupenda veritatis testimonia'. He asks for the intervention of her prayers ('sanctissimo odoramento orationum tuarum'), before, in the second half of the letter, answering her petition. Here he attempts to rehabilitate his colleagues at Mainz in her eyes by pointing out that they were merely acting in her best interests: 'dum adhuc eidem ecclesiae de absolutione ipsius incertum exstitit'. Then in a manoeuvre curiously like that of Pope Eugenius in the Richardis dispute (but this time with the opposite result) he says that he has written to the clergy of Mainz, ordering them to allow the divine offices to be resumed if they are satisfied by

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74. PL197.160 A-B.

75. PL197.160B: 'idem praesul de te praesumens, licentiam celebrare divina, usque ad reditum secure et in pace obtinuit'.

76. PL197.160B: 'e synodo litteras tuas divinorum interdictorias accepimus: quas ut paternae pietati tuae confido nunquam misisses, si veritatem hujus rei agnovisses'.

77. PL197.159B-160D.

witnesses about the status of the dead man.[78] He closes the letter by asking her forgiveness and hoping for a safe return to Mainz.

Before analysing the way in which Hildegard handled this dispute we should ask whether the issues at stake were properly represented by the parties concerned. Dronke raises, and dismisses, the possibilities that Hildegard refused to exhume the body because to do so might have financial or social consequences for Rupertsberg.[79] But if she believed that the man had died within the church how do we explain the contrary opinion of the prelates of Mainz? We have little information about Hildegard's relations with the clergy of Mainz in this period. It is true that, since the intrusion of Christian of Buch into the see in 1165 and Hildegard's apparent recognition of Pope Alexander, Rupertsberg and the cathedral of Mainz represent opposing tendencies.[80] On the other hand, Hildegard numbered many prelates who supported the Emperor among her friends, and had accepted, indeed sought, a charter from Barbarossa when he had already been excommunicated. Moreover, Philip of Heinsberg, whose witness had saved the day, was imperial chancellor and a frequent ambassador for the Emperor. Possibly no animus was felt towards Hildegard, and the chief object of the clergy's displeasure was the young man. But once again any simple division on schismatic lines doesn't seem to

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78. PL197.160D-161D.

79. WW, 196.

80. Despite Hildegard's reluctance to pronounce on the schism, her appeal to Alexander is a recognition of his authority.

81. This provides further evidence for Reuter's contention that the schism was not ideological but could be used to settle old scores. See Reuter, op. cit., 181.

work.[81] It is even possible that the prelates of Mainz were also acting in good faith, to protect Hildegard from the dangers of having a suspected excommunicate buried within the monastery, as Christian suggests. Yet Hildegard had good a priori reasons for believing that the man had been reconciled to the church before he died. She enumerates these in her letter to the prelates, her first salvo in the battle. Thus her reaction to their order to dig up the corpse - 'ex hoc non minimo terrore correpta' - is also understandable. Predictably, in the circumstances, Hildegard resorted to divine counsel, in the first instance to see whether the body should be exhumed. Her description of what happened is as follows:

> ....vigilantibus oculis in anima mea vidi quod, si iuxta preceptum ipsorum corpus eiusdem mortui efferretur, eiectio illa in modum magne nigredinis ingens periculum loco nostro minaretur, et in similitudine atre nubis, que ante tempestates et tonitura apparare solet, nos circumuallaret.[82]

In accordance with this belief, she refrains from disturbing the body while avoiding confrontation with her superiors by accepting the interdict: '...ne ex toto inobedientes existeremus...'.[83]

The grave consequences of this step should not be underestimated. Apart from the public shame involved, the interdict struck at the very foundations of monastic life, as Hildegard soon discovered. Her feelings of 'magna amaritudine' and 'ingenti tristitia', which seemed like a great weight pressing upon her, were followed by a vision. Taken as a whole the vision does not seem much concerned with the rights and wrongs of the particular case. In essence, it is an

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82. WW, 314.

83. ibid.

explanation and defence of the high claims she makes for music, and especially song, as an element in divine worship. She hopes, by the sheer force of her arguments for the primacy of divine praise, and the authority they derive 'a vivente luce', to admonish those who seek to curtail it in any way.

The first part of the vision deals with the nature and purpose of communion. In it Hildegard hears the voice of God telling her not to neglect 'sacramenta indumenti uerbi Dei' for a mere human prohibition.[84] The voice, however, does not recommend outright defiance, but tells Hildegard to have the interdict lifted: 'Sed inde uobis a prelatis uestris, qui uos ligauerunt, licencia querenda est.'[85] Then follows an abbreviated version of the doctrine of redemption discussed at much greater length in the Scivias. Because of the taint of original sin, only someone partaking of human nature but 'sine contagione tocius lesionis' could be man's defence against sin, and this is to be achieved by the sacrament of communion. Those who, like Adam 'preceptis Dei inobediens existit, et eum omnino in obliuionem habet', should be denied the sacrament, until, having performed a suitable penance they are allowed 'a magistris' to partake once more.[86]

The next sentence (apparently presenting a contrast to the former - 'Qui autem...qui uero..') reads in part: 'Qui uero in tali ligatura se esse nec consciencia nec voluntate cognoverit, securus ad perceptionem

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84. 'propter uerba humana': Ms B, fol.54v.

85. ibid.

86. ibid.

uiuifici sacramenti accedat...'. One reading of this could be simply that the person who knows he is not bound by excommunication can safely receive the sacrament. This is so unexceptionable as to be banal. Is Hildegard then saying that those who are formally excommunicated, if they themselves know that 'in conscience and intention' they should not have been, are also justified in taking communion? The question, as she explained earlier, is whether one is mindful of God's precepts, rather than man's.[87] Since Hildegard had her own situation in mind, the general question of the proper knowledge of whether one were justly or unjustly excommunicated did not arise. Although Hildegard has been called a 'Roman protestant', there is no indication that she would have sought to extend such freedom of conscience to all and sundry. Even in her own case, she appears not to have acted on this conviction, noting rather that

> ...culpabilis essem, quodcum omni humilitate et deuotione ad presentiam magistrorum meorum non uenissem, ut ab eis licentiam communicandi quererem...'

The effect of humility is rather spoilt when she adds 'maxime cum susceptione illius mortui culpa non teneremur...' and rehearses the reasons for her belief that he died within the church.

Having dealt with the question of communion, Hildegard turns to that of the performance of the opus dei, the curtailment of which was

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87. Cf. her accounting for intention in LVM. See above, p.171.

88. This is indicated by the space she devotes to it. The opus dei was a continual round of prayer - the raison d'etre of the monastic life. Communion, as Hildegard points out, was something that happened once a month. There is no evidence to suggest that the exaggerated devotion to communion, which was exhibited for example by Marie of Oignies and her contemporaries, had yet developed. See B.Bolton, 'Vitae Matrum...', in Baker, op.cit., 266-7.

apparently felt by Hildegard as an even greater blow.[88] Although Hildegard was permitted to recite it 'sub voce', she argues, in what amounts to a theology of vocal music, that this, as well as a deprivation to herself, is more especially a deprivation to God. The argument, as related to her by the voice 'a uiuente luce procedentem', once again hinges on the fall of man. At the fall, man also lost 'similitudinem uocis angelice, quam in paradyso habebat', and the capacity to hymn the creator which angels possess 'ex spiritali natura'. The quality of Adam's voice and musical ability before the fall was such that 'infirmitas mortalis hominis uirtutem et sonoritatem uocis illius nullatenus ferre posset'. Yet in order that God might not be deprived entirely of the praise of his creatures, he inspired his prophets and other learned and holy men to compose psalms and hymns as well as to invent instruments to accompany their singing.[89]

Moreover, the nature of the instruments and the manner of singing held symbolic meanings. Thus even musical notation, as represented by the Guidonic hand, is to remind man that Adam was formed by the finger of God.[90] So too, the lyre mentioned in Psalms. 32:91, having a lower note refers us to the discipline of the body while the ten-stringed psaltery which is higher, to the aspirations of the soul.

Thus music and song is shown to have a high place in the divine dispensation, being, in fact 'radicatum per Spiritum sanctum in

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89. f.55v.

90. For the Guidonic hand see WW, 315, n.103 and refs. This explains the otherwise obscure 'et quae cantabant, in juncturis digitorum, quae flexionibus inclinantur adaptarunt, ut et recolentes Adam digito dei...formatum'.

Ecclesia'. Yet Hildegard does not rest her argument on this high pedigree, suggesting an even more compelling one. As we saw in the dispute over Richardis of Stade, Hildegard was liable to attribute the (temporary) thwarting of God's plan to the machinations of the devil. In that case his attentions were directed at the individual. Here the argument is rather more general:

> Cum autem deceptor eius, diabolus, audisset quod homo ex inspiratione dei cantare cepisset, et per hoc ad recolendam suavitatem canticorum celestis patrie inuitaretur...exterritus est.[91]

He strove to pervert and prevent such divine praise by putting in the hearts of men 'malas suggestiones et inmundas cogitationes seu diuersas occupationes'. Even more to the point he pursued the same end 'per dissensiones et scandala, uel iniustas depressiones' perpetrated 'de ore Ecclesie'.[92] To make the implications of this statement even clearer, Hildegard appends the following warning:

> Quapropter summa uigilantia uobis (read 'nobis') et omnibus prelatis satagendum est, ut antequam omnes alicuius Ecclesie, laudes Deo canencium, per sentenciam claudatis, uel eam a tractandis, uel pecipiendis diuinis sacramentis suspendatis, causas pro quibus hoc faciendum sit, diligentissime prius disuentiletis et studendum uobis est.[93]

Hildegard includes some examples of the unworthy motives which might move prelates to act in this way - 'indignatione uel iniusto motu animi, seu desiderio ultionis' - thereby suggesting that she may have had doubts about the purity of the motives of those who opposed her.

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91. WW , 315.

92. R has 'corde', B 'ore' which is more pointed, f.55v.

93. Ms B f.55v.

After this pointed warning Hildegard adduces a few more general considerations in favour of her argument, before returning to her prophetic and minatory style.[94] Then she declares : 'Qui ergo Ecclesiae in canticis laudum Dei, sine pondere certe rationis, (silentium R) imponunt...' will suffer a fitting punishment. They themselves will be deprived of 'consorcio angelicarum laudum in celis'. Such will be their fate, unless, in a striking reversal of roles, they perform 'ueram penitenciam et humilem satisfactionem'. From this she passes on to a specific warning to those who have the power to bind and to loose, lest they 'claudenda aperiant et aperienda claudant'. She finishes by reminding those in authority, 'nisi...presint in sollicitudine' that they will be held doubly accountable for their actions. The concluding sentences of the letter maintain and extend the high prophetic tone. Once more she hears 'vocem sic dicentem', though this time it produces only a menacing catechism designed to inculcate a proper fear of the Lord: 'Quis creauit celum? Deus. Quis aperuit fidelibus suis celum? Deus. Quis eius similis? Nullus...', and the futility of acting against him: 'Nemo uestrum resistat uel se ei opponat, ne in fortitudine sua super vos cadat...' In conclusion she alludes to a theme which she has treated at greater length elsewhere: 'Istud tempus tempus muliebre est, quia iusticia Dei debilis est.'[95] There is no reason to think that she intends to exclude the prelates of Mainz from implication in this state of affairs or herself from the closing sentence where she

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94. e.g. on music and the microcosm: 'corpus uero indumentum est animae, quae uiuam uocem habet, ideo quo decet ut corpus cum anima per uocem Deo laudes decantet'.

95. See <u>Scivias</u> Book 3, vis.2 and <u>LDO</u> PL197.1017A

writes: 'Sed fortitudo justitiae Dei exsudat, et bellatrix contra injustitiam existit, quatenus devicta cadat.'[96]

Thus on the evidence of the letter just analysed, the arguments by which Hildegard hoped to convince the prelates of Mainz to restore the divine offices, consisted of a mixture of philosophical speculation on the nature and place of music in the divine economy, leading to a conclusion that its performance should only be prohibited on impeccable grounds, together with the suggestion that in the case of the Rupertsberg interdict, such grounds were wanting. The whole of the foregoing argument was, moreover, presented to Hildegard by or in her vision. Moreover, the strictures about unjust judgments and the responsibilities of those who have the power to bind and loose, together with the heightened ending of the piece, clearly suggest that Hildegard was trying, by the means she knew best, to intimidate her superiors into changing their decisions. And yet the attempt failed.

Then Hildegard, proving her adaptability once more, tried another tack. If the prelates were blind to such argument and preferred to conduct the case on legalistic lines she could match them at this.[97] So a witness was produced who swore that his own excommunication had been lifted at the same time as had that of the deceased. The priest who had performed this office for both men was also found. When this evidence carried the day ('ab eis cognita hujus rei veritate') Philipp lifted the ban. There the matter would have rested (and we should

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96. Unless the 'bellatrix' is 'fortitudo justitiae Dei'. But cf. Scivias Bk 3, vis.9 where the 'imagines' are not represented as belonging to any particular sex.

97. Of course it may have been Philipp who suggested the approach, but at least Hildegard was prepared to try it.

probably not have known how the interdict was lifted), except for the vexing arrival of Christian's letter upholding the ban which forced Hildegard to write to him again. The letter she wrote on this occasion, although describing what happened, and the part played in the process by the living light, does not reproduce the arguments which proved unsuccessful in her letter to the prelates of Mainz. Here, she relies on the witnesses and the recognition of the truth of the matter by the parties concerned. The only indication of her former prophetic persona, when victory has just been snatched from her grasp, is the remark:

> Unde in visione anime meae, in qua nunquam me aliquo verbo turbasti jussa sum corde et ore dicere: Melius est mihi incidere in manus hominum, quam derelinquere preceptum Dei mei'.[98]

In this confrontation, as in the earlier ones, Hildegard's chief approach was to attempt to convert others to her point of view by claiming knowledge of the divine will, while they were acting in ignorance (or possibly with malevolence.) One difference between the earlier and later cases is the more obvious demonstration of her prophetic powers in the latter. Whereas in her letters to Henry of Mainz and the von Stade connection she was content to assert her privileged status, in her letter to the prelates of Mainz she produced an elaborately worked out vision which would also have had the effect of reminding them of her other prophetic writings. Thus she not only claims prophetic knowledge but also gives a demonstration of it. Yet when this fails in her objective, she is prepared to countenance other methods.

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98. PL197.160C.

This last circumstance indicates both the advantages and disadvantages of adopting the prophetic role in an adversary situation. Even if her antagonists were prepared to admit her claims in a general fashion, or with regard to her major writings, it was also possible for them to hold that she was mistaken in the particular case at issue. Perhaps even the lack of observable phenomena which characterised her visions, made her claims for their divine origin easier to ignore when greater issues were at stake. Moreover, the sanctions that Hildegard could apply to those who proved resistant to her point of view were limited. It is hard to assess the subjective effect of the warnings and threats with which she peppers her letters. Did her allusion to the fall of Nebuchadnezzar produce a frisson in Henry of Mainz? Did her warnings about the fate of those who resist the will of God give the prelates of Mainz cause to reconsider? Whatever the immediate shock value, their long-term coercive effects were not great. We are left with the unexpected conclusion that Hildegard's adoption of the prophetic persona was never, in itself, sufficient to allow her to prevail in an adversary situation.[99] In the confrontations that she won, there was usually some other factor involved which tended to strengthen her claims. Often it was the manifestation of some illness, either preceding her tackling of the problem (as in the case of her financial settlement with Disibodenberg), or accompanying it, as in the case of the proposed move to Rupertsberg.

The question we must now address is why Hildegard continued to use

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99. In a non-adversary situation, where her advice had been asked for, her prophetic role had usually already been accepted by the inquirer.

her prophetic persona even when it offered no guarantee of success. It is here that the strength of the position becomes apparent. Hildegard persisted because no rebuff by mortal man could undermine her faith in herself. To those who proved obdurate she had a ready answer. They were spiritually blind, to take the charitable view, or worse, led astray by the devil.

Where such rationalisations were not available (or even combined with them) Hildegard was able to entertain the idea that some fault in herself was interfering with the way things ought to be. Thus at one stage in the Richardis case, Hildegard, while still maintaining that the move to Bassum was against God's will in an absolute sense, saw its accomplishment as a particular rebuke to herself, and so was still able to recognise it as part of God's plan. When Richardis died Hildegard was able to make a triumphant reassertion of her knowledge of the divine plan and her championing of it throughout the case.

Thus while the belief in her prophetic powers could not be undermined by mere human opposition (and luckily appeared to be borne out in many cases by events), it served another purpose. The shifts to which Hildegard was prepared to resort to maintain her own belief in her prophetic persona suggest that it served a psychological rather than a polemical purpose.

The way Hildegard used her prophetic role in her life paralleled the way she used it in her writing. Her conviction that she was privy to God's will gave her the courage to assert herself where she might otherwise have hesitated, and to stand up to her superiors when she thought they were in the wrong. In cases where there was a clear legal remedy she was prepared to appeal to it, but not without also

insisting on her superior knowledge of God's intentions.

But it was even more essential in situations which did not hinge on legalistic determinations, as in the cases of her move to Rupertsberg, her financial arrangements with Disibodenberg, and the Richardis case. Even in the matter of the excommunicate, where the alternatives presented to Hildegard were clear, Hildegard's decision to reject them both and hold out for a third way could not have been reached without an inner struggle.

Once the decision had been made, her unshakeable conviction that her cause was righteous carried her through. The close connection in Hildegard's mind between the vision which showed her the course to follow, and the illness which compelled her to pursue it is indicated by such statements as: 'in vera visione animae meae a summo judice pondere gravissimae infirmitas coacta sum...'.[100] In the next chapter I shall investigate the relationship between the two.

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100. PL197.159D-160A.

# CHAPTER VII: HILDEGARD'S VISION - STRUCTURE AND STRATEGY

> De quo genere speculandi siue uidendi modo quoniam per rarus ac pluribus etiam excellencium sanctorum noscitur in hac mortalitatis umbra incompertus fuisse res poscit ut aliqua dicantur...
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> Godfrey, Vita, I. 8

We saw in chapter III that many of Hildegard's contemporaries thought of her as a prophet, empowered to know and to make known the 'secreta Dei'. Moreover, chapter V is a demonstration of the way in which Hildegard assiduously promoted herself as a prophet in her writings. That this was no mere literary device is explained in chapter VI, where I examined the use of her prophetic persona in a series of personal and institutional confrontations. That she maintained this stand in the face of its obvious lack of success as a bargaining position, together with the positive shifts to which she resorted in order to safeguard her prophetic integrity, suggest that it was a very strongly-held belief - one might almost say, an article of faith.

It is also apparent that, like other articles of faith, it carried a great deal of psychological benefit for Hildegard. It gave her the courage and authority to act in ways which would otherwise have been difficult, perhaps impossible, for those reasons of status, education and sex outlined in chapter IV.[1]

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1. Impossible, given her beliefs about herself and women's place in the world, rather than logically impossible.

In all her public pronouncements Hildegard claimed to be acting as God's mouthpiece rather than expressing her own opinions. The benefits of such a course of action are all too obvious, as is the temptation to identify one's own will with the will of God. It would be possible to see Hildegard's appeal to her privileged source of authority as cynically manipulative in her personal dealings, and intellectually dishonest in her writings. That such doubts about her integrity have not been more generally expressed is probably due to her canonical status, although Singer and Dronke at times come close to doing so.

In this chapter I will suggest an alternative interpretation, drawing on insights provided by modern theories of psychology and neurology. I hope in this reconstruction of Hildegard to avoid some of the pitfalls encountered by the theistic interpretations of chapter II, while preserving a measure of intellectual charity (or giving Hildegard the benefit of the doubt) - something not always managed by secular interpretations.

Since the basis of Hildegard's conception of herself as a prophet was her 'vision', we must start with an examination of this phenomenon. The first thing to note here is that Hildegard appears to use the word in two slightly different senses, one subjective and one objective. Sometimes it is used to indicate the experience of the vision and at other times what is seen. Often it is hard to distinguish between the two senses, and it is possible that at times Hildegard did not intend to make a distinction. Thus her most commonly used phrase 'in vera visione...vidi' could be read as 'in a true visionary experience...I saw' or 'in a true vision

(object-specific)...I saw'. So too, her usual qualifiers could go equally well with the subjective or objective sense of 'visio', for example 'in mystica visione', 'in spiritali visione' or even the more difficult 'in umbra visionis'.[2] The matter is further complicated by Hildegard's use of the phrases 'in vero lumine' and 'in vera luce' in contexts which are interchangeable with the 'vision' formulae. Here similar problems arise. Does Hildegard imply that the light is what she saw, or the means by which she saw the vision. Since Hildegard also uses the phrase 'ad verum lumen prospexi' it is possible that the 'light' formulation indicates an objective description, although on the whole the 'vera visione' phrase refers to the experience. Once again it is hard to separate the experience of seeing light from the light itself. The analogy between ordinary vision and 'vera et mystica visio' should not be overlooked.[3]

When we try to classify what Hildegard saw in her visions we find

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2. 'The shadow of the visionary experience' is as difficult a concept as the 'shadow of the objective vision'. In the infrequently used 'in speculo verae visionis' (PL197.202C) and 'in vigili visionis' (Ms B, f.25v) emphasis seems to be on the experience rather than on the vision as object. Perhaps the difficulty is more apparent than real and arises from trying to translate the words without either losing the ambuiguity or sounding too odd. If we use 'in a vision', the 'objective sense' is dominant. 'In true vision' is adequate for the visionary experience, but the use of 'in vision' while maintaining both senses reads oddly. Possibly 'in the vision ' is best.

3. Thus Dronke's claim that Hildegard's 'visio' is also used to designate 'her peculiar faculty or capacity of vision...' (WW 146) is questionable. The reason for positing this meaning is no doubt the need to explain such phrases as 'He implanted this vision in my soul...', (Appendix, 12). Indeed it is more reasonable to modern minds to see this as describing an unactualised possibility or potential, rather than an experience or a set of visions with which she was programmed. But if we take the analogy of the past, present and future being coexistent in the mind of God, then there is a sense in which her visions could be said to have been implanted in her soul before birth. Once again, however, Hildegard might have intended all three meanings at different times or possibly the same time.

there were more than one distinct type. The simplest seems to have been an experience of a great light or brightness, often accompanied by a voice speaking to her. Hildegard describes her first vision at the age of two, in the following way: '...ac tertio etatis mee anno tantum lumen uidi quod anima mea contremuit sed pre infancia de his nichil proferre potui'.[4] So too, the vision that led to the writing of the Scivias was apprehended, at least in the first instance as '...maximum splendorem, in quo facta est uox de caelo ad me dicens'.[5] Many of the letters appear to refer to the same type of vision - basically, a heavenly voice emanating from, or accompanied by, an intense experience of light.[6]

But the visions which she describes in her extended written works are not of this simple kind, although they may form the initial stage of a more complex vision.[7] They are filled with highly coloured images of mountains, buildings, composite animals, people, angels and representations of the cosmos and the Deity. Sometimes the visions appear as static tableaux, and sometimes as dynamic processes,

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4. Appendix, 13.

5. Scivias, 3.

6. Indeed, although in some cases the word 'vidi', is used the voice seems to have been the main element. The connection between seeing and hearing in Hildegard's visions may well have been one of 'synchaesthesia', where there is a cross-over between senses, sounds being seen and colours etc. heard.

7. Cf. 'Protestificatio' with the beginning of the Scivias and the prologue of the LVM with the first vision.

8. Some examples of the variety and complexity of the visual elements (the auditory ones being necessarily omitted) in Hildegard's works can be seen in the illustrations to the Scivias and the Lucca Ms of the LDO. The fact that there is no illustrated manuscript of the LVM possibly reflects the more complex and disorganised nature of its visions.

complete with speech and movement.[8] Since the relationship between the simpler and more complex visions is not obvious from a study of her visionary works in isolation, further clarification must be sought from the accounts she gave elsewhere about the nature of her vision. As noted earlier, the autobiographical fragment in the Vita provides a more or less chronological account of the unfolding of Hildegard's visionary experiences, until the one that precipitated the writing of the Scivias.[9] More useful for our purposes is her letter to Guibert of Gembloux, where she provides several pieces of evidence which tend to confirm some of the impressions gained from our study of her use of the terms 'vera visione', 'vivente lumine' and so on in her letters. Thus she seems to identify the visionary experience ('visio') with the light present in, or to, her soul.

Hildegard's account of the actual location of the light is ambivalent. At times it is described as if it were external (from heaven, or at least somewhere other than Hildegard, as when she says 'ad verum lumen aspexi') and at other times appears to be located in some sense inside her, specifically, in her soul. Hildegard sensibly refused to be pinned down on this question, declaring that the light 'locale non est' and has no measurable extent : 'nec altitudinem, nec longitudinem nec latitudinem, in eo considerare valeo'.[10] Clearly, however, we can identify 'visionem hanc' which Hildegard claims to have seen from her infancy 'in anima mea usque ad presens', with this light. However, the light presents itself to her it two forms. The first, of which she is always conscious (in the sense of being able to

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9. See above, p. 147.

10. WW, 252.

address it at will) is called 'umbra viventis luminis'. About this she says : 'Anima autem mea nulla hora caret prefato lumine'.[11]

The relationship between this light and the more elaborate visions, is that their various elements are reflected in it, just as heavenly bodies are reflected in water.[12] Moreover, the words that she hears are not audible in the usual sense, but are presented to her understanding 'sicut flamma choruscans et ut nubes in aere puro mota'. Furthermore, the apprehension by which she understands what she sees and hears is immediate: 'simul video et audio et scio' and long lasting ('per longum tempus').[13]

She also claims to produce answers for her correspondents from this light. In that case it might be wondered why so many letters refer to 'lux vivens' or some equivalent as the source of the answer, rather than the 'umbra viventis luminis'. Apparently Hildegard used the phrase as a kind of shorthand, only spelling out the relationship between the two in her letter to Guibert. Here she writes that the 'lux vivens' is immanent in the light which she calls the shadow of the living light. However she is only able to glimpse it occasionally and then the experience fills her with joy. This important passage should be quoted in full:

> Et in eodem lumine aliam lucem, que lux vivens michi nominata est, interdum et non frequenter aspicio, et quando et quomodo illam videam proferre non valeo, atque interim dum illam intueor, omnis tristicia et omnis

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11. ibid., 253.

12. It is perhaps not without significance that water descriptions ('fons' etc.), occur as alternatives to the light descriptions. Cf. also the mirror of Alan of Lille.

13. ibid.

> angustia a me aufertur, ita ut tunc mores simplicis puelle, et non vetule mulieris, habeam.[14]

Since this is the ultimate source of her knowledge, she can describe herself as giving answers 'de fulgore viventis lucis'. It is for this reason that she directs her gaze to the living light. Even if she cannot be sure of seeing it every time, she knows that the answers to her questions will appear in its umbra.

In the letter to Guibert, Hildegard makes a definitive statement about the circumstances in which she sees her visions. She sees them when fully awake and conscious, but not by means of her bodily senses:

> ...ista autem nec corporeis auribus audio, nec cogitationibus cordis mei, nec ulla collatione sensuum meorum quinque percipio, sed tantum in anima mea, apertis exterioribus oculis, ita ut numquam in eis defectum extasis paciar, sed vigilanter die et nocte illa video.[15]

Hildegard was particularly anxious to deny that her visions were obtained from dreams. She made this point in the 'Protestificatio', as well as the Preface to the LDO.[16] She was equally adamant about the fact that she remained fully conscious throughout her visions. This presents a contrast to Elisabeth of Schönau who probably represented the norm in these matters.[17] This is how she described the typical onset of one of her visions: 'Deinde cum inchoaretur missa de beata virgine domina nostra, sabbatum enim erat, collapsa sum in

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14. WW, 253. This is one of the few instances of a recognisably 'mystical' experience in Hildegard. Even so it is restrained compared, for example, with those of Teresa of Avila.

15. WW, 252.

16. Scivias, 4: '...vigilans corpore et mente, interioribusque auribus audivi, et non in somnis nec in exstasi...' PL197.741.

17. Note the many references to the novelty of Hildegard's manner of seeing, e.g. Appendix, 8.

extasim, et apertum est cor meum, et vidi super aerem...'.[18]

Hildegard provided further information about the physical state in which she saw her visions which is more difficult to interpret. In the 'Protestificatio' she stresses the fact that she sees her visions 'nec in abditis locis...sed...in apertis locis'.[19] Whether this means that her visions were somehow potentially verifiable, perhaps in the sense that she experienced them in the presence of others, is unclear. Although it may include the possibility, it cannot be taken to mean that Hildegard only experienced her visions outdoors.[20] Indeed, the only occasions when Hildegard locates her visionary experiences, occur in the descriptions of her illnesses.

In one particular case she was so ill that her life was despaired of and she had been placed on the horsehair cloth on the ground precribed for the dying.[21] Yet even this could be considered an open rather than a hidden situation as she describes the scene in the following words:'...et prelati mei, filie, et proximi cum planctu

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18. Examples can be multiplied from her first work: eg.,'In festivitate beatorum apostolorum Petri et Pauli in prima vespera collapsa sum in extasim, et vidi gloriosus illos principes...' Visionen, 9. In the LVD, however there is less emphasis on her pathology. The visions tend to be introduced by such words as '...ego Elisabeth vidi in visione spiritus mei...'; Visionen, 88. I take this to be further evidence of Hildegard's influence.

19. Scivias, 4.

20. For the association of mystical experiences with mountainous and desert places see: B. Aaronson, 'Mystic and Schizophreniform States and Experience of Depth' Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion 6 (1967) 246-252.

21. For the cilicium see D.Knowles, ed. The Monastic Constitutions of Lanfranc (London, 1951), 125.

22. Appendix, 20.

magno uenirent, ut meum obitum uiderent'.[22] Elisabeth of Schönau again makes an interesting contrast to Hildegard. The connection of her visions with the performance of the liturgy has already been pointed out. Indeed, her visionary descriptions are precisely located according to the part of the office being chanted at the time, while Elisabeth's situation and even bodily posture is often described.[23] If this was the visionary norm, and other evidence suggests that it was, Hildegard was perhaps seeking to align her very different experiences with it, by insisting on their public nature, while distancing them from the more extreme pathological manifestations exemplified by Elisabeth.

Before leaving Hildegard's descriptions of her visions, a final point of difference between her visions and those of Elisabeth of Schönau should be mentioned. It has to do with the comparative degrees of reality which the objects of the vision had for each woman. Although neither writer discusses the matter, significant differences in the way they experienced their visions are evident from their writings.

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23. Visionen, 10: '(In vigilia beate Marie Magdalene) In die ad missam, dum orarem positis in terra genibus, vidi in aere quasi prope terram duos viros splendidos ....Eadem die ad vesperam, cum non possem interesse conventui propter invaliditatem, sedebam in capitolio cum magistra, et eramus in psalmis vespertinis...et vidi irim...'; ibid., 15-16: 'Factum est etiam in una dierum, ut veniret quidam ex fratribus, ferens in pixide divinum sacramentum dominici corporis ad opus cuiusdam sororis infirme. Cumque staremus in circuitu eius, ego et quedam sorores mecum loquentes cum eo, aspexi pixidem et cogitabam intra me de dignitate sacramenti illius, et subito cor meum dissolutum est, ita ut vix me continerem ab exstasi'; ibid., 37: 'In festivitate beati Ciriaci, qui erat in dominica die, cum sex diebus egrotassem eo languore, qui visiones rerum magnarum in me solet precedere, traxi egra membra de lectulo,et veni in locum secretum orationis gratia. Cunque psalmis intenderem, aggravata sum passione vehementi, et veni in mentis excessum.'

The difference, in its most pronounced form, is the difference between vision and hallucination. Hildegard is generally somewhat distanced from the objects of her vision, which are almost like images projected on a screen before her.[24] The images are not localised by reference to Hildegard. Nor do they occupy the same physical space as the visionary. Her mention of directions (N.,S.,E.,W.) are only relative to the visionary scene itself. Moreover, she often employs the words 'velut' or 'quasi' in connection with what she sees. Hildegard, as observer, has little interaction with the figures that people her visions.[25] Since there was no failure of bodily sensation, there was no danger of mistaking the nature of her experience.

With Elisabeth the case is different. Since her normal sensory input is overwhelmed by her vision, she sometimes shows herself uncertain about how to classify what she sees. On one occasion she sees a rainbow 'solo mentis intuitu', but asks that she be allowed to view it 'etiam oculo carnis' so that the spiritual nature of the first experience might be demonstrated to her.[26] Sometimes, indeed, she is doubtful about the source of a vision, as in the case of a dove which she fears might be a diabolical manifestation. She is reassured when it perches on the cross, since she knows that the devil would flee its presence.[27]

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24. Indeed she refers to the figures she sees as 'imagines'.

25. One of the few examples is described as follows, 'Et ecce maximus splendor uelut manus tetigit me'. (Scivias, 176) This is hardly on a par with Elisabeth's experiences.

26. Visionen, 10.

27. ibid., 8.

She describes what is apparently an even clearer case of hallucination when in the grip of a severe fever. Desiring the sacrament of unction, she was forced to await her abbot's return since he had gone to visit 'ad loca vicina'. At about dusk:

> ...sedente magistra coram me, accessit vir quidam venerabilis, et stetit in conspectu meo et existimabam, ipsum esse domnum abbatem, et letata sum.

Elisabeth chides him for being late, asks him to recite the Lord's Prayer and Creed over her and to anoint her. When the rite has been performed, he gives her his blessing and departs. When her mistress, 'que verba mea omnia audierat' asks what has been going on, Elisabeth writes that she replied:'Nonne dominus abbas presens fuit et inunxit me? Illa autem neminem illic se videsse testata est. Tunc igitur primum intellexi, visionem spiritualem me vidisse'[28] Even in the later books of the Visiones where Hildegard's influence first becomes apparent, Elisabeth seems to become part of her visions in a way that Hildegard does not. Thus we read:

> ...sustulit me angelus domini in locum alium iocundissime amenitatis, et statuit me sub arbore quadam, que tota pulcherrimis floribus erat vestita. Mox consedi in herba, et replevi pugillum meum floribus, qui iacebant undique in circuitu mei...[29]

But if Hildegard's visions were not of this overtly hallucinatory kind we must try to decide to what altered state of consciousness they

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28. ibid., 31. Compare the number of times Hildegard engages in dialogue, esp. in Scivias, 309.

29. Visionen, 46.

belong, if indeed we can speak of an altered state of consciousness in this context.[30] In some ways visions such as those claimed by Elisabeth of Schonau are more readily explained.[31]

It has, since Singer's first suggestion in 1917, become something of medical orthodoxy to claim Hildegard among other distinguished sufferers from migraine.[32] Indeed, illustrations from the Scivias form the cover of a recent popular work on the subject.[33] There are two questions in need of examination here. The first is whether Hildegard's descriptions of her visions accord with accounts of migrainous phenomena; the second is whether they are reducible to this physiological cause. The results of these investigations have significant bearing on our interpretation of Hildegard.

Singer's original identification of what he took to be 'scintillating scotomata' in the Scivias illustrations led him to suggest that Hildegard's visions contained elements derived from migrainous experiences.[34] While it should be remembered that

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30. The hallmark of hallucinatory experience is that it is mistaken for physical reality. But the fact that Hildegard attributed spiritual reality to her visions does not mean that they were not hallucinatory, pace P. North, 'Mysticism and Prophetism in Hildegard of Bingen and in Ramanuja', PhD thesis, University of California at Los Angeles, 1977, 33-5.

31. The neurophysiogical explanations for hallucinations, whether induced by alchohol, disease, drugs or ascetic practices are well known. Elisabeth's frequent loss of consciousness might also suggest epilepsy as a contributing factor.

32. See above, p. 59. Migraine, 21 mentions Caesar, St Paul, Kant and Freud. See also F. Clifford Rose and M. Gawel, Migraine: The Facts (Oxford, 1981) and G. Selby, Migraine and its Variants (Sydney, 1983).

33. Rose, op.cit.

34. 'Views', 53.

Hildegard did not illustrate her own works, the possibility of such features being introduced by a migrainous illustrator is not great, since it is generally agreed that the Scivias pictures bear a close relationship to the text.[35] Yet Singer's approach was not reductive. He did not think that Hildegard's visions consisted of nothing more than a record of her pathology. Indeed, he claimed that Hildegard used the visionary form as a literary device in which to present her thought, although the idea may have been suggested by her experience of migraine. Such a view puts a great strain on Hildegard's credibility and leads to the inevitable conclusion that the circumstantial details with which Hildegard bolsters her visionary and prophetic claims are merely factitious.

Although Singer has been taken to task for concentrating on the 'pathological basis of the visions', rather than the 'intellectual qualities of what Hildegard said about them', his account, as explained above, was not reductive.[36] Indeed he did not go far enough in linking other aspects of Hildegard's life and visions with this underlying cause. Moreover, since the medical writers who have repeated the migraine theory only get their information about Hildegard second-hand, from Singer, or, in the case of Selby and Rose, at third-hand from Sacks, they have not been able to explore the hypothesis fully.

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35. See L. Baillet, 'Les miniatures du "Scivias" de Ste. Hildegard' Monuments et Memoires publies par l'Academie des Incriptions et Belles Lettres 19 (1912). Selby talks of the 'writings and drawings of the nun', thus illustrating the dangers of second- or third-hand information.

36. WW, 147.

In order to remedy this deficiency some discussion of the nature of migraine will be necessary. For our purposes an understanding of the biochemical nature of the various mechanisms at work in an attack is not essential. Indeed the current state of medical opinion on this issue is not unanimous.[37] Rather, what is required is a phenomenological approach, where the ways in which the condition affects its sufferers can be discovered. To this end I draw largely on the material provided by Sacks in his analysis of case histories.

On first considering Singer's claim that Hildegard was a migraine sufferer, I was puzzled by the fact that in none of the many descriptions of her illnesses does she appear to refer to a headache.[38] However identification of migraine with headache is apparently a common mistake, not only of laymen. Sacks writes in his preface:

> '...I thought of migraine as a peculiar type of headache, no more and no less. As I saw more patients, it became apparent to me that headache was never the sole feature of a migraine, and, later still, that it was not even a necessary feature of all migraine.'[39]

In discussions of migraine two basic types are generally distinguished; the common migraine and the classical migraine. It is possible for the same person to experience both types either at different stages of his or her life or concurrently. Hildegard's

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37. For a simple explanation see Selby op. cit., chapter 3 esp. 21-24.

38. This may be the reason why Singer concludes that Hildegard was suffering from a 'condition that would nowadays probably be classified as hystero-epilepsy': 'Views', 238. It is no doubt on the basis of this that J. Benton suggests Hildegard suffered from temporal lobe epilepsy. 'Consciousness of Self', 268, in <u>R&R</u>

39. op.cit., 13.

description of her illnesses indicates that she was such a person.

Sacks describes the migraine as a sequence consisting of 'prodromal stages, "attack proper", resolution, and rebound'.[40] Symptoms found in the prodromal stage may be physical (thirst, water retention, constipation) and/or emotional (hyperactivity, insomnia, emotional arousal, irritability). These merge imperceptibly into the attack proper which is characterised by vascular headache, nausea, weakness, drowsiness and depression. The resolution of the attack may come in sleep or by '"lysis", a gradual abatement of the suffering accompanied by one or more secretory activities' (vomiting, diarrhoeia, menstrual flow, tears, secretion of urine) or 'crisis', 'a sudden accession of physical or mental activity which brings the attack to an end within minutes'.[41] A rebound phase is found after some attacks which does 'not represent a mere restoration to the premigraine condition, but a swing in the direction of arousal'. This is understandably enough least in evidence if the attack has been accompanied by severe vomiting and fluid loss.

The classical migraine is to be distinguished from the common by the nature of the prodromal phase, or 'migraine aura'. Sacks lists the following symptoms, which may be present at different times or together

(a) Specific visual, tactile, and other
sensory hallucinations.
(b) General alterations of threshold and excitability.
(c)Alterations in levels of consciousness and muscular tone.
(d)Alterations of mood and affect.
(e)Disorders of higher integrative functions; perception,ideation,

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40. Migraine, 49.

41. ibid., 48.

memory and speech.[42]

Although 'a remarkable variety of visual hallucinations may be experienced during the course of a migraine aura' some visual effects seem specific to it and are not encountered, for example, in an epileptic aura.[43] These are the so called 'scotomata' which often follow the perception of phosphenes in the visual field.[44] These are also called 'migraine spectra' because of their shape and colours, and 'scintillating' because of their characteristic flickering (estimated to be at the rate of 8-12 scintillations/second). Such phenomena are also called 'fortification spectra' because of the castellated structure of their margins, which are said to be 'reminiscent of the ramparts of a walled city'.[45] Scintillating scotomata are also associated (either before or after their passage) with areas of total blindness in the visual field. Such phenomena have been used to explain the 'extinguished stars vision' in the third book of the Scivias.[46]

But even this apparently clear-cut example contains elements which are not explicable in terms of a simple procession of phosphenes. The first problem concerns the extent, or identity of the visions, and the

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42. ibid., 69. Note here that Sacks uses 'hallucinations' in a weaker than normal sense, which does not vitiate my argument above about the nature of Hildegard's visions. Sacks, op. cit., 82-3, writes of the 'pseudo-objectivity' of migraine hallucinations: 'there exists even in the most sophisticated patients a tendency to objectivise the sensations of the aura'.

43. Migraine, 101.

44. ibid., 74-79.

45. ibid.

46. Scivias, 327f.; 'Views', 53-4 and Migraine, 104-7.

relationship between the illustrations and the written descriptions.[47] Although it was the illustrations of the Wiesbaden codex that alerted Singer to the migrainous origins of the visions, they should not be viewed in isolation from the text.

Vision one of the third book of the Scivias is illustrated by two pictures, the second of which is the 'extinguished stars' vision.[48] The first illustration depicts a bearded male figure, dressed in a blue gown, green mantel and red and gold cope, sitting on a golden throne with his feet on a red and gold cloud above a set of concentric circles of varying shades of blue. It is hard to assimilate the illustrations of the figure on the throne to any play of scotomata.[49] Yet when we turn to the written description of the vision we find:

> et illic conspexi...regalem thronum rotundum, inquo sedebat quidam vivens lucidus mirabilis gloriae, tantaeque claritatis ut nullatenus eum perspicue possem intueri...Et de ipso lucido sedente in throno protendebatur magnus circulus coloris ut aurora...'[50]

Here, then, the picture which purports to illustrate the vision incorporates elements of interpretation which were not strictly present as a visual element in the visionary experience according to Hildegard's description. On the other hand, there is no doubt that Hildegard knew, as it were, while experiencing the vision, that this brilliant but undefined figure represented God, since she describes herself as addressing him: 'Et audivi eundem qui sedebat in

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48. Scivias, plate 20.

49. ibid., plate 19.

50. Scivias, 328.

51. Scivias, 329.

throno...Et respondi...Rogo te, mi Domine...'.[51]

There are still other cases in which figures appear in the illustrations along with the usual stars, blackness and concentric lights, of a quite distinct kind. One such is the example of the man smelling a flower in the illustration to the first vision of Book Two.[52] Moreover this figure does appear in Hildegard's description of the vision:'...cuis odorem idem homo naribus quidem sensit, sed gustum eius ore non percepit...'.[53] There seem to be two possibilities here. Either Hildegard saw the man and the flower while experiencing the aura, or she added them, consciously or unconsciously, to her subsequent account. Sacks describes the tendency of some migraine patients to interpret the phenomena of the aura as images: 'thus one patient ... described small white skunks with erect tails, moving in procession across one quadrant of the visual field...'.[54] The tendency towards 'formed visual hallucinations' is noted also by Selby, who appears to think that Hildegard's visions can be ascribed to such a process. He writes: 'The fact that Hildegard was a mystic and a highly imaginative writer may help to explain why the majority of our patients do not describe similar experiences.'[55]

The temptations of ascribing an excessively mechanistic view to Hildegard's work, where each vision represents an actual, datable migraine experience are increased the more one learns about the

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52. Scivias, plate 10.

53. 'Scivias', 110.

54. Migraine, 73 and note.

55. Selby, op. cit., 40.

phenomenology of migraines. Thus Hildegard's more elaborate visions, such as those which come near the end of the Scivias or form the bulk of the LVM need not be ascribed solely to hallucinations formed from scotomata. Sacks writes that in some cases 'free-wheeling states of hallucinosis...may be experienced during intense migraine auras'. [56] Yet this apparent explanation raises further problems, since Hildegard refers to the LVM as a single vision which took her five years to record.[57] It seems unlikely that anyone could remember such a freewheeling hallucination of such evident complexity in the way she claims. The matter is made more doubtful since Sacks describes them as 'confused or confabulatory states of which the patient retains imperfect recollection'.[58]

Are we then, with Singer, to recognise the migrainous impulse of the visions but to conclude that they bear little relationship to their source, thus relegating much of Hildegard's evidence about her writings to the realm of pious fraud? I believe the relationship between her experience and her belief is much more subtle, but one which indeed owes much of its characteristic ambiguity to the nature of the migraine experience. Although Sacks' book is useful for its illustrations of particular clinical aspects of migraine by the use of case histories, his insight into the overall understanding of migraine is even more fruitful for our study.

Sacks outlined his approach to the topic in his preface, describing

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56. Migraine, 93-5.

57. 'fortem et mirabilem visionem vidi, in qua etiam per quinquennium laboravi': Pitra, 8.

58. Migraine, 93.

it as 'simultaneously envisaging migraine as a structure whose forms were implicit in the repetoire of the nervous system, and as a strategy which might be employed to any emotional, or indeed biological, end'.[59] I have earlier suggested that various episodes of illness in Hildegard's life seem to have been used in this strategic way, without specifically linking them to migraine. The task that remains, is to see whether the approaches, as it were from different ends of the problem, can be made to converge. For this purpose the relationship between Hildegard's vision and her reported illnesses needs further investigation.

Hildegard's picture of her health in childhood exhibits several features typical of migraine sufferers. The early onset of the condition is found in many of Sacks' case histories, as is the general picture of a 'delicate' constitution.[60] In childhood it seems that Hildegard suffered from isolated migraine auras (that is, auras which were not followed by an attack proper) and common migraines, or possibly migraine equivalents, which she did not connect specifically with her visions. [61] However, as she reached middle age there was some change in the pattern of her illness, or her perception of it, which she describes in several different contexts. The simplest possibility is that the earlier mixture of isolated migraine auras and common migraines coalesced to give Hildegard her first experience of a classical migraine. Such shifts in the overall pattern of the disease

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59. Migraine, 14.

60. ibid., 135-7.; Selby, op.cit., 31.

61. For migraine equivalents see Migraine, ch 2.

62. ibid.,, passim.

throughout the sufferer's life are well recorded.[62]

The autobiographical portion of the Vita suggests a close connection between the vision of 1141 and the illness which forced her to reveal it, as she writes: 'in eadem uisione magna pressura dolorum coacta sum palam manifestare que uideram et audieram'.[63] The account in the 'Protestificatio' of the Scivias suggests a more ample time-scale. She writes:'Sed ego...tamdiu non in pertinacia, sed in humilitatis officio scribere recusaui, quousque in lectum aegritudinis flagello Dei depressa caderem...'[64] Yet a classical migraine attack lasting up to thirty-six hours is not unknown, and as such might easily be apprehended as 'flagellum dei'. That the attack is dispelled when Hildegard decides to take positive action, is suggestive of the 'crisis' resolution described above. Finally, Hildegard seems to be describing the 'rebound' reaction when she writes: '...viribus...receptis de aegritudinis me erigens...'.

Doubtless we should take Hildegard's accounts of the matter as more authoritative than Godfrey's. Thus, although he suggests some time between the vision, Hildegard's illness, and the commencement of the writing it may be attributed to a desire to exaggerate what he took to be miraculous. Thus if an illness is sent by God, its severity is also significant. That Godfrey is not a reliable guide to chronology can be seen from his description of what followed, which he indicates took place shortly before the Synod of Trier.[65]

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63. Appendix, 13.

64. Scivias, 5.

65. See above, p.38.

Linked to the change in the pattern of her illness, (or possibly independently of it) the vision of 1141 marked a change in the way Hildegard perceived her visions. The change in perception may have been implicit in the experience itself, or brought about by the physical sequel to the vision, assuming that it was her first experience of classical migraine. In the 'Protestificatio' Hildegard describes a sudden access of understanding, in markedly theological terms. Even this characteristic can be explained by the migraine theory. Thus Sacks writes:

> Among the strangest and most intense symptoms of migraine aura, and the most difficult of description or analysis, are the occurrence of feelings of sudden familiarity and certitude...or its opposite...Such states are experienced, momentarily and occasionally, by everyone; their occurence in migraine auras (as in epileptic auras, psychoses, etc.) is marked by their overwhelming intensity and relatively long duration.[66]

It was this combination of factors that finally allowed Hildegard to make something out of her experiences, by recording them. It is significant that the early parts of the Scivias contain visions which can be closely linked with migraine aura effects, are relatively discontinuous, and are interpreted as illustrating fairly basic tenets of the faith. It seems likely that Hildegard was drawing on a series of different aura experiences which she had been having for some time before her integrative experience, as the wording of the autobiographical passages suggest: 'Tunc in eadem uisione ...manifestare que uideram et audieram; sed ualde timui et erubui

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66. Migraine, 91-2; Cf. Jacob Boehme in W. James, Varieties of Religious Experience(London, 1952) 401-2.

67. Appendix, 13, where what she had been silent about refers to her accumulated earlier visions.

proferre que tam diu silueram.'[67]

Since the writing of the Scivias took place over a ten-year period, it is not surprising that it should reflect a process of experimentation and development in the deployment of her visionary materials. It seems reasonable to assume that the more Hildegard was concentrating on a particular problem, the role of the priesthood, for example, the more likely she would be to see its allegorical representation in any migrainous experience she had at the time. Moreover, once she was convinced of the divine source and allegorical nature of her visions, the harder it would be to separate the raw data of the experience from her subsequent interpretation. The tendency to interpret, or even to precipitate a migraine attack in connection with a current preoccupation is indicated by other events in Hildegard's life. One such was her decision to move to Rupertsberg. That this was no sudden whim is indicated by references in the Vita to the physical strains brought about by the increasingly crowded conditions for the nuns at Disibodenberg.[68] We can only guess at the psychological strains occasioned by Hildegard's growing fame. The illness which followed the revelation of God's plan for the move, seems to have been of some duration, and to have been marked by different stages. The immediate effect of the vision seems to have been partial blindness, paralysis and pain. Even these effects can be attributed to the aftermath of a severe migraine attack. In Hildegard's account her sight returned when she told what she had seen, although the paralysis persisted for some time longer.[69] Godfrey's account once more

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68. Appendix, 5.

69. See Migraine, 114; Appendix, 17.

provides a more miraculous gloss, where her capacity for speech alternates with her ability to walk. Here the interaction of physical and psychological mechanisms is apparent.

The tendency to identify each illness described by Hildegard as a manifestation of migraine is encouraged by its protean forms. Thus the thirty-day illness where Hildegard's death was thought to be imminent can be accommodated to the patterns, as well as the symptom she describes in the words 'ex calore aerii ignis venter meus fervebat'.[70] The vision she received at this stage obviously had much to do with her current preoccupations, as did those which deal with her disaffected daughters, which are also mentioned. It should not be forgotten that the LVM was also being written at the time. The fact that its genesis is not described in these autobiographical fragments is possibly of some significance, considering the divergence of the work from its predecessor.

A further insight into Hildegard's visionary methodology can be gained from her description of the events which preceded the writing of the LDO. There seems little doubt that when she writes of the event: '...mysticam et mirificam uisionem uidi ita quod omnia uiscera mea concussa sunt et sensualitas corporis mei extincta est... ' she is describing an example of migraine syncope.[71] The vision that accompanied this was interpreted by Hildegard as a partial

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70. Migraine, 143; 52-3. It is perhaps significant that the redactor of Ms G writes 'per totam diem et noctem in doloribus istis occupata sum'. I believe that the alterations in G stem from the hand of Guibert, especially since they occur principally in Hildegard's reported words. While others shrank from interfering with her inspired words Guibert showed no such scruples.Cf. Pitra, 432.

71. Appendix, 28. For migraine syncope see Migraine, 38.

anticipation of a work she would be called to undertake in the future and no doubt served to prepare her mind for the next major visitation. During this period news of Sigewise had reached Rupertsberg and Hildegard turned her attention to the problem of the ways of demons. The question of how she was able to consult the living light at will, without waiting for a migraine which she might interpret will be considered later.

In the last decade of her life the migraines could be seen as clustering, as they had in the lengthy illness of 1158-61. So the illness which she describes as lasting for six months was not one continuous seige, since she was able to recognise within it several different visions, and moreover, was able to make visits to other religious establishments, in order to deliver her messages.

In this way the genesis of Hildegard's major visionary works, as well as the feeling of being coerced to write them down or otherwise make them public can be attributed to Hildegard's own particular neuro-physiological profile. Taken as random events they can be accommodated by the migraine theory, but what of the cases in which she claims to have looked to the living light in order to secure an answer for a particular enquirer? One possible explanation is that she saved up such questions until she was favoured with a migraine or isolated migraine aura. Given the apparent frequency of her attacks this is a reasonable assumption. It might also explain why some correspondents complain of delays or a complete lack of response to

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72. A striking example of this is provided by the monks of Villers who sent a number of questions on theological topics to Hildegard. Guibert of Gembloux's letters trace the course of the enquiry. Hildegard failed to provide answers to them all and in the end Guibert advised

their questions.[72] On the other hand Hildegard claimed in her letter to Guibert of Gembloux, discussed earlier, that the living light was always with her. Possibly this should be interpreted as meaning that by this time Hildegard had discovered a technique for tapping the source at will. Whether this means she could turn on an aura of an elementary 'photism' kind, or simply that she was so convinced of the reality of her source of knowledge that a conscientious meditation on the question produced the subjective effect of the migraine is impossible to say.[73] It does mean, however, that Hildegard's claims to be able to provide answers from the living light to particular questions need not be dismissed as mere charlatanism. Charity demands that she be given the benefit of the doubt.

So far, the analysis of Hildegard's visions and illnesses in terms of the migraine theory has given coherence and credibility to what might otherwise be thought of as a random collection of rather far-fetched episodes. But while such experiences might make someone a visionary (though on the whole according to medical case histories they do not), the step from visionary to prophet is not automatic. The first thing to note is that Hildegard's preoccupations were intellectual, rather than mystical. She sought to understand the world in all its aspects, natural, human and divine.[74] The evidence for such a claim is to be found in the nature of her writings. Moreover, she wanted to change the world in some manner: in a general

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the monks to apply to the university at Paris for solutions. See Pitra, 389, 393, 395.

73. For 'photism', see James, op. cit., 246.

74. Another way of putting this would be to say that she sought to understand the divine in its human and natural aspects.

sense by making public her knowledge and understanding of God's ways in her writings, and more particularly by recommending certain attitudes and actions. To these ends the migraine experience was a wonderfully adaptable instrument, and Hildegard herself was wonderfully adaptive. Let us look more closely at how the two interacted.

Hildegard's account in the Vita suggests that as a child her migraine experiences were not understood or used by her in any positive way. They were the cause of embarrassment and inconvenience.[75] It was only during her adolescence that she began to understand their privileged nature. The positive attitude towards her experiences was no doubt aided by Jutta and Volmar's acceptance of them, although as yet Hildegard was not confident enough to declare them publicly. We may surmise that Hildegard, by now satisfied that her visions were indeed from the liivng light began to make more structured interpretations of them , or in other words, to see more in them. Nor should we forget the cumulative effect of Hildegard's reading and meditation on the scriptures and other works. Suddenly, as described in the Scivias, Hildegard experienced a migraine which she recognised as having great subjective significance. In it, she found a way of combining such experiences with her own thoughts and meditations. What were in fact two 'inner experiences' - the migraine vision and her own mental processes - coalesced to form the vision and

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75. '...plus secundum mores infantis quam secundum annos atatis mee exhibui ualde erubui et sepe fleui': Appendix, 13 - an example of 'lysis'?

76. It is interesting that she recognised the 'inner' nature of the experience by locating it 'within her soul'.

its interpretation and were perceived by her as coming from a divine source.[76]

But why had Hildegard waited so long before declaring her hand? This can only be explained in terms of the internalisation of the prevailing attitudes towards women in general, and the male monopoly of the production of the written word.[77] The wording of Hildegard's descriptions of her years of silence is most suggestive where she writes 'sub quieto silentio depressi'. So too is her attribution of vindictive and derogatory attitudes to men in connection with her work.[78] While the actual timing of the decisive event may best be explained in terms of a developmental psychology such as Erikson's, her reaction to what happened is even more significant.[79] Even when she was convinced that her visions were intelligible, formed communications from God, which she had been commanded by him to promulgate in writing, she hesitated to do so. Whether the intense suffering connected with the vision was an integral part of the migraine or whether it was caused in some less obvious way by Hildegard's response to conflict resulting from the message she received, is not clear. Hildegard, however, believed it was a sign of God's displeasure at her failure to carry out his command. The fact that she recovered as soon as she made up her mind to perform the task, while attributable to the

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77. This applied both to authorised and non-authorised discourse, for which useful distinction I am indebted to an abstract of a paper given by John Ward at the AHA Conference in Melbourne, 1984.

78. See above, p. 161.

79. See for example, E.Erikson, Young Man Luther (London, 1959) esp. 258-53.This is not without problems; Hildegard would have been rather old to be suffering an 'identity crisis', was it then a 'midlife crisis?

normal course of a migraine, would also have acted as a strong reinforcement both of Hildegard's understanding of the situation, and of the behavioural patterns involved.

Since the factors controlling the occurrence of different forms of migraine in the same person are not known, and since migraine auras, classical, and common migraines all seem to have been experienced by Hildegard throughout her life, it may not be too far-fetched to suggest that she experienced classical migraines when the contents or interpretation of the vision placed her in a state of profound conflict. The paradoxical effect of this was that she was enabled to perform the threatening action because the illness was interpreted by her, and others, as a sanction. The pattern can be traced from the first explicit description of her vision of 1141, through the proposal to move to the Rupertsberg and the settlement of financial affairs with the parent house, to her confrontation with the prelates of Mainz in the last year of her life.

The complex interaction of such physical and psychological factors finally enabled Hildegard to fulfil a role which she had long desired.[80] The prophetic role was not only self-reinforcing but reinforced by her ecclesiastical superiors, as she wrote: 'Hec ad audienciam Moguntine ecclesie allata cum essent et discussa, omnes ex deo esse dixerunt, et ex prophecia quam olim prophete prophetaverant.' Soon, indeed, the view received the ultimate authority at the Council of Trier. Before long the attitude had

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80. Here I interpret her apprehension of the call to be a prophet as the projection of a desire to fill such a role, or at least to exploit its possibilities.

filtered down to the clergy and members of the laity who wrote to Hildegard for advice.[81] The correspondence proved another opportunity for mutual reinforcement of the role.

By the time Hildegard came to embark on her second major work, she could only have abandoned the visionary form pioneered in the Scivias at considerable risk to her credibility. Besides, there is no reason to doubt that she was still experiencing visions, even if her reports of them seem at some remove from the less mediated experiences represented by the earlier parts of the Scivias.

The initial visionary impulse of the LDO is indicated in the Vita.[82] It is clear from the account that Hildegard had been thinking over the problem or set of problems long before she felt able to answer them through her visions. Indeed, the fact that the LDO revises some of the cosmological accounts first essayed in the Scivias suggests that Hildegard had, in some sense, been pondering them in the intervening years.[83]

The increasing sophistication of Hildegard's theological explanations is paralleled by her growing facilty in writing Latin. It

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81. Appendix, 14.

82. Appendix, 28-9,46

83. Cf. Scivias, 40f. and PL197.755f.

is difficult to believe that someone as perceptive as Hildegard would have been unaware of her own intellectual progress.[84] That this did not allow Hildegard to gain confidence in her own capacites indicates that Hildegard was, to some extent, a victim of her own mythology. The combination of inner and outer circumstances that led Hildegard to believe that the products of her own intelligence were, in fact, the 'secreta dei' allowed her to overcome what would otherwise have been a crippling diffidence, but once this was achieved she became locked into a pattern, not only of behaviour, but of belief.

This account of Hildegard relieves her both of the burdens of sainthood and of duplicity. At the same time she can no longer be held up as a feminist exemplar. Indeed, her insistence that all her writings and pronouncements were not her own but from God, made her a hard act to follow.[85] But more importantly it helped to perpetuate the ideology of the inferiority of women by explaining away an otherwise obvious challenge to the notion. This missed opportunity however, seems to have been the price she had to pay for being able to carry out what she did by the only means available to her. Paradoxically, she was able to circumvent the obstacles in her way, only because she believed implicitly in the prevailing ideology.

Implicitly? There is some possible evidence to indicate that Hildegard, at some stage in her life, had doubts about the course she was forced to take. The evidence for such a view comes from a miracle

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84. Indeed, she does seem to recognise it, as far as the visions are concerned, in her preface to the LVM: Pitra, 8.

85. The dangers of such a course are amply illustrated by the fate of Joan of Arc.

described in the Acta. It is so short that it may be quoted in full:

> Adjecit etiam Hedewigis conversa quod beata Hildegardis quadam puellam (Gerdrudis nomine), quae se transmutaverat in scholarem, nomine expresso vocavit, scilicet Gerdrudem, licet eam ante non viderit, cui dixit: Convertare ad statum meliorem, quoniam annos tuos non ultra numeravi; ac si diceret: Hoc anno morieris. Sed cum beatam Hildegardem vidisset, compunca confessa est se esse mulierem; et sic conversa eodem anno mortua est.[86]

This is not, on the face of it, a very startling exercise of miraculous powers. It does, however stand out among the more stereotyped healing miracles usually encountered in such documents.[87] For this reason it may indeed be a reflection of an actual encounter. Female transvestites are not unknown in medieval history and literature, the most famous being Joan of Arc. There is also a more shadowy tradition of female transvestite saints whose origins go back to sub-apostolic times.[88] The paradox of an action condemned by Scripture (cross-dressing) forming the principal motif in the saint's life can be explained by considering the milieux and purposes for which the original stories were written.[89]

In the twelfth century we find occasions when cross-dressing was condoned. Guibert of Nogent, for example, in his description of the disastrous Commune of Laon, included in his autobiography, writes:

> Per vineas itaque inter duo brachia montis positas, die ille et nocte iter fugientium et clericorum et mulierum

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86. Bruder, 121.

87. See for example: F.C. Tubach, Index Exemplorum (Helsinki, 1969).

88. See John Anson, 'The Female Transvestite in Early Monasticism:The Origin and Development of a Motif' Viator 5 (1974) 1-32; V. Bullough, 'Transvestites in the Middle Ages' American Journal of Sociology 79 (1974) 1381-1394.

89. ibid., 5ff.

> fuit. Vir plane muliebrem non verbatur habitum, nec mulier virilem.[90]

So too, Caesarius of Heisterbach in his Dialogue on Miracles has examples of women adopting male clothing to escape from various dangers and difficulties.[91] But even more apposite is his account of a young woman who entered the Cistercian monastery of Schönau disguised as a youth.[92] Her sex was only discovered when she died a couple of years later. Although some elements of the story recall aspects of the legendary female monks, it may have some basis in truth. Where independent confirmation exists Caesarius has been found to be generally accurate, and despite his subject matter, no sensatonalist.[93] Caesarius claims that his informant one Brother Hermann who went through his novitiate with the supposed 'Brother Joseph'. But whether the account is based on a real occurrence or not, is less important in terms of our argument than Caesarius' attitude to the supposed female monk. We find that he views the whole episode in a highly favourable light and quotes her laudatory epitaph at Schonau with evident approval.

In comparison, Hildegard's reaction to Gertrude - predicting death for the transgressor of the sex role - seems extreme. The significant difference between the two cases is that Gertrude was not passing herself off as a monk, but as a scholar. That is to say, a clerk who

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90. Bk 3, c. 9.

91. e.g. a woman who went away from Cologne disguised 'in the cloak of a lay-brother', Bk 1, c.41.

92. This was not, apparently Elisabeth's Schönau. There were four places bearing this name in Germany at the time.

93. This is the opinion of no less a critic than G.C. Coulton, see Ceasarius, op. cit., xvii.

was at liberty to travel from place to place to further his studies. Whereas other forms of instruction may have been open to women if they were lucky, this one was not. The scholar's life represented the intellectual apprenticeship that was denied Hildegard. That she was able to bypass this obstacle as well as others in her path, by taking advantage of a special set of circumstances, has been demonstrated, but not, I now suggest, without paying a price.

Perhaps Hildegard, when confronted by this Gertrude who had 'transformed herself into a scholar', experienced in a particularly dramatic way something analogous to Freud's 'return of the repressed'. Analogous, because what are repressed according to Freud are ideas of a sexual nature, although in The Psychopathology of Everyday Life he suggested that thoughts of violence might undergo the same process.[94] Hildegard herself was not reticent about sexual matters. Discussion of such questions as the physiology of coitus, the relative strengths of sexual desire in men and women, bestiality and so on, can be found both in her medical/scientific works and Scivias.[95] Nor did violence present a problem for Hildegard that needed to be repressed. By a familiar mechanism, her aggressive thoughts, even when directed towards her spiritual superiors, were ascribed to God.

What Hildegard had repressed (as more shocking than sexual fantasies

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94. S. Freud, The Psychopathology of Everyday Life tr. A. Tyson (New York, 1965) esp. 276f.

95. See WW, 171-183. While some of the nineteenth-century commentators had Hildegard anticipating electricity and magnetism, Dronke comes close to having Hildegard anticipate some of the findings of Masters and Johnson.

to a nineteenth-century middleclass Viennese woman) was a challenge to female role expectations. This included the idea that women might claim to compete on an equal footing with men in the intellectual sphere, an idea she seems to have abandoned once and for all with her adoption of the prophetic role at the time of writing the Scivias. However, when presented with a perfect reification of the idea in the person of the transvestite scholar Gertrudis, the whole conflict which she had sidestepped by becoming the instrument of God, was recalled. Hence Hildegard's overreaction in terms of what we gather was the more usual attitude to female transvestites. At this stage of her life Hildegard had too much invested in the prophetic role to entertain notions of intellectual equality.

Postscript

Just as every generation is said to bring a different perspective to the study of history, so those who concentrate on a single life tend to reconstruct it, as far as the material allows, if not in their own image, at least according to their own prejudices and beliefs. So Hildegard has appeared in the guise of a weak woman, distinguished from her sisters only by the accident of having been chosen as God's mouthpiece; a Roman-protestant; the first German naturalist; a fore-runner of Teilhard de Chardin and an exponent of 'sapiential theology'. My reconstruction of her as an embattled female intellectual is no doubt part of the same process. Perhaps my interpretation of the Gertrudis-episode to supply her with a more developed feminist consciousness - together with the deterministic explanation for her repression of it - is also symptomatic. Excuses for a failure in radical commitment are always easy to find.

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Incipit prologus in uitam sancte
hildegardis uirginis.

DOMINIS
uenerabilibus. Ludowico.
Godefrido. abbatibus.
Theodericus humilis
seruorum dei seruus:
salutem cum deuotis
orationibus. Auctoritatis uestre pre
ceptum accepi. ut post Godefridum
uirum ingenio clarum. uitam sce
ac deo dilecte hildegardis uirginis.
quam ille honesto stilo inchoauit.
sed non perfecit. in ordinem collige
rem. et quasi odoriferis floribus ser
ta contexens. uisiones eius gestis
suis insertas. sub diuisione librorum.
in unius corporis summam redige
rem. Visum est michi hoc opus
uiribus meis nimis arduum. qui
etiam et uerecundum. ut scilicet
quasi quidam arbiter sederem. et
de alieno opere sententiam tenerem.
Sed ecce dulcis et amica influit
animo. quod uires quas imperitia
denegat. karitas ministrat. et me
lius esse cum pudore hominum
ferre ridiculum. quam inobedien
tie subire periculum. Itaque paruo
commodo ut prefati uiri liber pri
me positionis locum optinens. nul
lam sue dispositionis patiatur iac
turam. deinde secundus liber ui
sionum sancte uirginis pulcherri
mum et admirabilem textum. ter
tius miraculorum que ministris de
us per eam operari dignatus est.
a nobis digestam. diuisam et ordina
tam contineret scripturam. Ita pre
cedentis scriptoris non minuetur
gloria. et ad uerum sapientiam ce
lestem que uisionem. et diuinam uir
tutem legentium incitabitur me
moria. Quis enim bonus non ma
gis incitabitur magnis affectibus
ad uitam perhennem sancte et pie
et iuste uiuendo anhelare. cum
uiderit gemmam preclaram tot
ornamentis uirtutum. uidelicet
uirginitatis. patientie. simul et
doctrine. tam insigniter radiare.
Idcirco dedimus operam ne in ab
scondito uel sub modio accensa lu
cerna Christi poneretur. quasi occul
tata: sed super candelabrum po
sita luceret omnibus qui in do
mo dei sunt. uite. uerborum. et
morum splendidissimis exemplis imi
tanda. Quod si quid in hac re inde
ta obsequentis peccauit temeritas.
benigna iubentium dominorum
indulgeat karitas. totumque suo
deleciunt ascribat studio. qui tam
graui nos imbecilles uoluit onera
re operis negotio. Igitur ut quali
tas eiusdem operis clarius elucescat.
hec epistola ei cum subiectis ca
pitulis prescribatur. ut quid ubi
lector inuenire debeat. citius ag
noscatur.

Explicit prologus.

Here begins the prologue of the Life of the holy nun, Hildegard.

Theodoric, humble servant of the servants of God, greets with devout prayers the venerable lords-abbot Ludwig and Godfrey. I have accepted the command of your authority, that after Godfrey, a man of outstanding ability, I should set in order the Life of the holy nun Hildegard, beloved of God, which he began in excellent style but did not finish. And as if weaving a garland of fragrant flowers, I should set out her visions, combined with the events of her life, divided into books, but forming one whole. This task seemed beyond my powers and I was also diffident about sitting in judgement and giving an opinion on another's work. But then it came to my doubting and anxious mind that Love would bolster the powers that inexperience diminished. And it would be better to bear the ridicule of men than to put myself in danger of disobedience. So I obeyed in this way, allowing this man's work to stand in the first place without spoiling its arrangement at all. Then second would be the beautiful and wonderful account of the visions. The third book of the miracles that the marvellous Lord deigned to perform through her should contain the writing arranged, divided and ordered by us. Thus the glory of the first writer will not be diminished and the recollection of the reader would be inspired to true wisdom, celestial vision and divine virtue. For what good man would not be more greatly inspired to pant after eternal life by living in a holy, pious and just manner when he sees this celebrated gem, shine forth so strikingly with so many virtuous ornaments of virginity, patience and learning. Therefore, we have taken pains that the shining light of Christ be not put in obscurity or under a bushel like something to be hidden; but placed on a candlestick it will light all who are in the house of the Lord, to be imitated with splendid examples of in life, words and deeds. But if, in this undertaking, the servant has erred in ignorant rashness, the kind lords who requested it will pardon me. And may they ascribe all fault to their zeal who would load our weakness with so weighty a work. Therefore, so that the nature of the work may shine forth more clearly this letter has been prefixed to it with the chapter headings added so that what the reader should find will be readily perceived. End of the prologue.

Incipit liber primus Vite sancte hildegardis deo dilecte uirginis. capitulum primum.

De natiuitate, oblatione et educatione sancte uirginis et quomodo ad scribendum illustrata sit claritate diuini luminis.

In Romana et publica regnante heinrico nominis huius quarto augusto, fuit in gallie citerioris partibus uirgo tam generis quam et sanctitatis ingenuitate illustris nomine hildegardis, patre hildeberto, matre mechtilde progenita. Qui licet mundanis implicati curis et opulentia conspicui, creatoris tamen donis non ingrati filiam prenominatam diuino famulatui mancipaverunt, eo quod iam in teneris etatis eius premature sinceritas ab omni carnalium habitudine multum dissentire uideretur. Mox namque ut potuerat primam temptare loquelam tam uerbis quam nutibus significabat his qui circa se erant secretarum uisionum species, quas preter communem ceteris aspectum speculatione prorsus insolita intuebatur. Cumque iam fere esset octo annorum consepelienda Christo, ut cum ipso ad immortalitatis gloriam resurgeret, recluditur in monte sancti dysibodi cum pia deoque dicata femina iuttha, que illam sub humilitatis et innocentie ueste diligenter instituebat et carminibus tantum dauiticis instruens in psalterio dechacordo iubilare premonstrabat. Ceterum preter psalmorum simplicem noticiam nullam litteralis uel musice artis ab homine percepit doctrinam, quamuis eius extent scripta non pauca et quedam non exigua uolumina. Verum hoc ex ipsius pocius dictis in promptu est declarare. Ait enim sic in libro suo, qui Scivias prenotatur: Cum quadraginta duorum annorum septemque mensium essem, maxime choruscationis igneum lumen aperto celo ueniens totum cerebrum meum transfudit et totum cor totumque pectus meum uelut flamma non tamen ardens sed calens ita inflammauit, ut sol rem aliquam calefacit super quam radios suos ponit. Et repente intellectum expositionis librorum, uidelicet psalterii, euangelii et aliorum catholicorum tam ueteris quam noui testamenti uoluminum sapiebam, non autem interpretationem uerborum textus eorum, nec diuisionem syllabarum, nec cognitionem casuum aut temporum habebam.

Here begins the first book of the Life of St Hildegard, the nun beloved of God.

I. About the birth, oblation and education of the holy nun and how she was inspired to write by the brightness of the divine light.

When Henry, fourth of that name, ruled the Holy Roman Empire, there lived in hither Gaul a virgin famed equally for the nobility of her birth and her sanctity. Her name was Hildegard. Her parents, Hildebert and Mechthilde, although wealthy and engaged in worldly affairs, were not unmindful of the gifts of the Creator and dedicated their daughter to the service of God. For when she was yet a child she seemed far removed from worldly concerns, distanced by a precocious purity. Even when she was just learning to talk she indicated by words and signs to those who were close to her, the sorts of secret visions that she perceived with truly praeternatural sight, beyond the common sight of others. Thus when she was about eight years old she was enclosed at Disibodenberg - buried with Christ that she might arise with Him to immortal glory. Here, Jutta, a pious woman dedicated to God, carefully introduced her to the habit of humility and innocence. She taught her the psalms of David and showed her how to give praise on the ten-stringed psaltery. Apart from this simple acquaintance with the psalms she received no instruction in literary or musical skills from any person, and yet she left not a few substantial works. But this is best told in her own words. Here is what she wrote in the book called Scivias: When I was forty-two years and seven months old, a burning light of exquisite brilliance came down from the open heavens. It flowed like a flame through my entire brain, heart and breast. And so it fired me, not burning, but warming, as the sun warms those things on which its rays fall. And suddenly I understood the meaning of the interpretation of the books - that is to say, of the Psalter, the Evangelists and other Catholic books of the Old and New Testaments, but not the meaning of the words of the texts, nor the analysis of the syllables, nor did I have a knowledge of cases and tenses.

Quomodo in monastica profes-
sione sub sacro uelamine profi-
ciente quamplures continuos lan-
guorum dolores sepe sustinuit.

Sed ut ad propositum redeam.
uirgo xpi uoto monastice pro-
fessionis et sacri uelaminis be-
nedictione prouecta crescebat.
et ibat de uirtute in uirtutem.
annitente et congaudente pro
fectibus eius supra nominata
matre uenerabili que iam ex dis-
cipula magistram. ac preuiam se-
mitarum excellentium eam fieri
cum admiratione cernebat. Flagra
bat siquidem in eius pectore ka
ritatis benignitas. que nullum
a sua latitudine excluderet. Tur-
rim quoque uirginitatis muris
tuebatur humilitatis. hinc cibi
potusque parsimonia. uestium ui-
litate fouebatur. unde cordis tran-
quillitas pudibundo silencio. ac
uerborum paucitate monstraba
tur. que omnia sanctarum mo
nilia uirtutum summi fabri
cata manu artificis. pacientia
custos in sponsa xpi commendo
seruabat. Sed quoniam uasa fi-
guli probat fornax. et uirtus in
infirmitate perficitur. non defu
erunt ei ab ipsa fere infancia cre
bri et pene continui languorum
dolores. ita ut et pedum incessu
priuato ueheretur. et cum tota car
nis materia fluitaret. uita. uel
quedam esset preciose mortis y-
mago. Quantum uero exterioris
hominis uiribus decrat. tantum
interior per spiritum sciencie
ac fortitudinis accedebat. et cor
pore tabescente. mirum in modum
feruor spiritus inestuabat.

Quod cum scribere reuelata
sibi in spiritu dubitaret infir
mabatur. cum uero ab abbate
suo adhortata scriberet rursum
sanabatur. III.

Cumque in sancto proposito
multis annis succresceret.
deo soli complacere satageret.
iamque tempus instaret quod
ad multorum profectum uita
eius ac doctrina patesceret. com
monetur diuinitus uoce ad e
am facta. de cetero que uide
ret uel audiret scribere non
cunctaretur. Illa uero pro femi
neam uerecundiam. et uulgi
uaniloquia. et temeraria homi
num iudicia. trepidante que
ostensa sunt celitus secreta re
uelare. stimulo acriori coarta
tur non hesitare. tandem quo-
dum longa egritudine tabefac
ta decubuisset. primo cuidam
monacho quem sibi magistrum
preposuerat. et per eum abbati
suo cum metu et humilitate.
causam huius flagelli aperuit.

II. How she progressed in the monastic profession although she suffered the continual pains of illness.

But to return to our task. The maiden dedicated to Christ flourished under the blessing of the sacred veil of the monastic profession, going from virtue to virtue. Meanwhile that venerable mother mentioned above (Jutta) recognised and rejoiced in her progress. She understood and applauded when the pupil became the teacher and led the way to sublimer paths. Kindly love so burnt in her breast that nothing was excluded from its scope. The wall of virginity protected the tower of humility. Here she was frugally raised in meat, drink and clothing and the tranquillity of her heart was demonstrated in modest silence and economical speech. Patience, the treasurer, kept all these jewels of holy virtues, fashioned by the hand of the great Craftsman, for the adornment of the bride of Christ. But as the kiln tries the potter's vessels and produces strength from weakness, she was from her infancy almost never without the frequent or continual pains of illness, so that she could rarely put her foot to the ground and while the whole fabric of her body was wasting, her life was a kind of image of precious death. But as the outer man grew weak, so the inner increased in strength through the Spirit, in knowledge and fortitude and as the body wasted away, the fire of her spirit burnt marvellously.

III. That when she doubted to write what had been revealed to her in the spirit she fell ill; but when she wrote at the insistence of her abbot she got well again.

And when for many years she had kept to her sacred vow, desirous of pleasing God alone, the time came for her life and teaching to be revealed for the benefit of many. She was divinely advised not to put off writing about the rest of what she saw and heard and was given the right to bear witness. And she, while indeed fearing through womanly modesty the vanity of the crowd and the rash judgements of men was compelled by a keener goad to hasten her revelations. At last, bedridden of a wasting disease, with fear and humility she revealed its cause, first to a certain monk whom she had chosen to be her teacher, and through him to his abbot.

Iure rei nouitatem insolitam men
te pertractans. quamquam deo
nichil impossibile esse cognosce
ret. adhibitis de collegio pru
dentioribus experiendum iudica
uit. quod audiebat. ac de scrip
turis et uisionibus eius quedam
sciscitatus. ea que deus daret.
monuit declarare. Mox ut illa
scribendi opus quod non didice
rat adtemptauit. redeunte
uirium sibi solita possibilita
te de lecto languoris erigit.
Tunc abbas accepta inusitate
miraculi certitudine. non suo
contentus iudicio rem ad pu
blicam noticiam iudicat esse
proferendam. ueniens q; ad
matricem sedem Mogontiam.
coram uenerabili archipresu
le henrico. et capitaneis ec
clesie quod cognouerat expo
suit. scripta quoque que uir
go beata nuper ediderat os
tendit.

Quod papa eugenius audie
rit nuncios [illegible] et litteris suis eam
uisitauit. et ad scribendum ea
que in spiritu uidebat eam a
nimauit.

Per idem tempus sancte ro
mane sedis antistes felicis
memorie Eugenius. celebrato
treueris uniuersali concilio. per
Adelberonem treuerorum ar
chiepiscopum deuocatus tre
ueri morabatur. Visum est ponti
fici moguntine ciuitatis et maio
ribus cleri ad apostolici cognitio
nem de his esse ueniendum. qua
tinus ex ipsius auctoritate nosce
retur. quid de compertis recipien
dum. uel refutandum foret. At
papa summe discretionis. auditu
tante nouitatis admiratus. cum
deo cuncta sciret esse possibilia.
rem diligentius inuestigare gesti
ens. uenerabilem uirdunensem presulem.
et cum eo adelbertum primicerium.
aliasque personas ydoneas dirigit
ad cenobium. sub quo eadem uirgo
tot annis degebat inclusa. ut sine
strepitu uel curiositatis acumine
quid rerum esset. ab ipsa sciscitaren
tur. Quibus humiliter inquiren
tibus. cum illa simpliciter que de
se erant aperuisset. ad apostolicum
redierunt. et magna ipsius. mag
na cunctorum astancium expecta
cione. que audierant retulerunt.
His papa recognitis. iubet repre
sentari scripta beate hildegardis.
que sibi de predicto cenobio perlata
susceperat. et ea manibus propriis
tenens. ipse q; recitatoris uice fun
gens. archiepiscopo et cardinalibus
omnibus q; qui de clero aderant
publice legit. ac responsa uirorum
quos ad hec indaganda miserat pro
nunciando. omnium mentes et uo
ces in laudem conditoris et congra
tulationem excitauit. Aderat ibi

dem etiam
hardus a
ante cete
tur summ
nem lucer
tur. sed g
pore ipsi
uellet. sua
Ad hec re
tam beni
sensum p
beatam u
concessa
ne licenci
spiritum
ad scribe
locum q
uit. dat
nobis gra
litteratu

Quod
locum ce
puellis

Igitur be
a humil
mine ne
aperuit
pinionu
q; flag
ad eam
sub hab
semitis
unum
caperet
amplia
consiliu

He, pondering the novel strangeness of the matter, though he knew that nothing was impossible where God was concerned, consulted with the wiser of his bretheren and gave his opinion that what he heard should be put to the test. When he had examined certain aspects of her writings and visions he bade her reveal what God granted to her. As soon as she attempted the task of writing, though unschooled in it, her former vigorous strength returned and she rose from her sick bed. Then the abbot, having accepted the authenticity of the strange miracle, but not satisfied with his judgement alone, saw that the matter should be brought to public notice. He went to the mother church of Mainz and secretly explained what he knew to Henry, the venerable Archbishop, and the prominent churchmen. He also showed them the writings that the blessed nun had just produced.

IV. That Pope Eugenius sent letters and messages to her from Trier and encouraged her to write down the things which she saw in the spirit.

At this time, the head of the Holy Roman See, Eugenius of happy memory, having held a universal council at Rheims, remained in Trier at the request of Archbishop Adalbert. It seemed to the Bishop of Mainz and the higher clergy that Hildegard's work should be brought to the notice of the Pope and on examining it, his authority would recognise what might be accepted and what rejected. But the Pope, having diligently attended to this great novelty, knowing that with God all things are possible, made a more sedulous investigation. He sent the venerable Bishop of Verdun and with him Adalbert the Primicerius and other worthy persons to the monastery in which the virgin had lived enclosed for so many years, to learn from her, without fuss or inquisitive prying, how matters stood. When she had disclosed, in her simplicity, information about herself to the humble inquirers, they returned to the Pope and those waiting expectantly, bringing the great news of her that they had heard. Hearing this, the Pope ordered the writings of the blessed Hildegard to be brought forth which had been conveyed to him from the monastery, and holding them in his own hands, assuming the office of Lector, he read aloud to the Archbishop, the Cardinals and all the clergy present. Announcing the opinions of those whom he had sent to investigate the matter, he urged the hearts and voices of all to praise and give thanks to the Creator.

Unde etiam sancte recordationis Bernardus abbas clarevallis, quo mediante ceteris quoque annitentibus monebatur summus pontifex, ne tam insignem lucernam silentio tegi pateretur, sed gratiam tantam quam tempore ipsius dominus manifestare vellet, sua auctoritate confirmaret. Ad hec reverendus pater patrum tam benigne quam et sagaciter assensum prebens, litteris salutationis beatam virginem visitavit, in quibus concessa sub Christi et beati petri nomine licentia proferendi quecumque per spiritum sanctum cognovisset, eam ad scribendum animavit. Sed et locum quo illa fovebatur honoravit, datis ad abbatem et fratres et nobis gratulatoriis ex suo nomine litterarum apicibus.

Quo infirmitate languit cum locum celitus sibi ostensum cum puellis suis adire demorata fuit.

Igitur beata hildegardis cum fiducia humillima verbis que non ab homine neque per hominem acceperat aperuit et profudit tam sancte opinionis odorem bonum, longe lateque flagrantem. Tunc confluebant ad eam filie nobilium non pauce, sub habitu religionis regularibus sententiis instituende. Cumque omnes unum reclusionis habitaculum vix caperet, iamque de transferendis et ampliandis earum mansionibus consilium versaretur, demonstratur per spiritum illi locus ubi naha fluvius reno confluit, videlicet collis a prioribus diebus sancto Roberto confessori ex nomine adtitulatus, quem ille olim patrimonii iure possederat, ubique cum beata genitrice sua Bertha nomine et sancto confessore Wiberto vitam feliciter in dei opere et famulatu consummavit, ac de sepultura eius ac reliquiis loco nomen inheserat. Itaque dum virgo dei locum transmigrationis, quem non corporalibus oculis, verum intima visione cognoverat, abbati suo et fratribus designaret, sed illis hesitantibus et quod discessum eius moleste ferrent, ne iussum dei peragere impediretur, decidit ut prius in lectum prolixi langoris, de quo non ante surrexit quam abbas et ceteri divino se nutu urgeri conspicerent ad concedendum, nec obstarent, sed pro posse annitterentur. Ex quibus arnoldus ex laico monachus, qui forti obstinatione renitendo ceteros ad obsistendum videbatur animare, dum esset in predio ecclesie villa wilare, tanta vexatione subito perculsus est corporis, ut de vita quoque desperaret. Linguam quoque in immensum turgentem ore continere non posset. Postulavit ergo nutibus quibus poterat, ut ad sancti Roberti ecclesiam deferretur, moxque ut illuc vo

Also present was Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux, of blessed memory. The Pope was urged by his mediation, seconded by others, not to allow such a singular light to be enveloped in silence, but to confirm with his authority so great a grace that God wished to manifest at this time. To this the venerable Father of Fathers, as benign as he was wise, gave his approval. He addressed the holy nun with letters of greeting in which permission was given, in the name of Christ and St Peter, to reveal whatever she had learned through the Holy Spirit and he encouraged her to write it down. He honoured the place in which she was raised, giving the abbot and brothers of the monastery a congratulatory letter, written in his name.

V. That she became ill when she put off moving with her nuns to the place divinely shown her.

So, with humblest faith, the blessed Hildegard revealed and spread far and wide the good, fragrant savour of holy repute in words that she received not from man nor through man. Then many daughters of the nobility came to her, that they might follow the way of the Rule in the religious habit. And since one recluse's dwelling could scarcely hold them all, a plan for moving and enlarging their accommodation was already being considered when a place was shown to her by the Holy Spirit. It was the hill where the Nahe flows into the Rhine, named for St Rupert the Confessor from early times. He possessed it by right of patrimony and there he spent his life, happy in the service of God with his blessed mother, Bertha, and the confessor, St Wibert. The place keeps his name alive because of his tomb and relics. So the virgin of God told the abbot and brothers her plan to move to a place which she knew from a true interior vision and not with the eyes of the body. While they hesitated, not liking the idea of her going, but not wishing to go against the will of God, she lay sick in bed for a long time, as before. She was not able to rise until the abbot and the rest realised that they were being urged by a divine sign to consent. Then they did not stand in her way, but helped her as much as they could. Among them, Arnold, a layman turned monk, seemed to inspire the others to be obstructive by his great stubbornness in resisting. When he was on an estate of the church, the vill of Weiler, his body was suddenly seized with such distress that he despaired of his life, as his mouth could not hold his immensely swollen tongue. He asked by signs to be taken to the church of St Rupert and soon, while he vowed that he would

uit· quod ultra non obstaret· sed pro
posse annitteretur· protinus recep
ta incolomitate cepit adiutrix esse
preparandarum mansionum· et pro
priis manibus dissipare uineta·
ubi domus edificarentur sancti
monialium receptaculis apte· Ipsa
uero eius migrationi hec habita
cula parabantur· dum propter mo
ras diuine uisionis exequende
iaceret· gressuum penitus officio
destituta· et tanquam silex rupes
de lecto in quem deciderat· nullate
nus moueri posset· non satis cre
dulus abbas reluctantibus intra
uit ut uideret· Cumque totis uiri
bus per se conaretur· uel de capi
te illam attollere· uel de latere
in latus reclinare· nichil que conan
do penitus efficeret· tam insolito
stupefactus miraculo· cognouit
non passionis humane· sed diui
ne correptionis esse quod gereba
tur· Nec sibi ulterius contra eam
... celesti edicto· ne deterius
quippiam et ipse pateretur· Quoniam
uero locus prenominatus par
tim ad moguntine ecclesie cano
nicos pertinebat et fundus cum
oratorio sancti Roberti possessio
erat comitis bernhardi de hil
densheim· facta per interuentum
fidelium legatione· uirgo dei
prescia licentiam sibi et soror
ibus suis obtinuit illic inhabi
tandi·

Quod tociens in ualitudine la
borauit quociens superne uisionis
iussa perficere tardauit·

Igitur post longam gradiendi defec
tionem· dum iam utrumque delibera
tum esset· ut cum sororibus dimit
teretur ad locum quem in spiritu
preuiderat· ingressus abbas ad ia
centem et afflictam dixit· ut in no
mine domini surgeret· abitura ad
mansionem sibi celitus predestinatam·
Cum illa dicto citius surgente· tan
quam nichil tam prolixo tempore
debilitatis sensisset· stupor et admi
ratio cunctos qui aderant apprehen
dit· Hec immerito cum et ea que cir
ca decumbentem geri uisa erant non
minus essent stupenda· quia ex quo
locum mutandi celitus accepit man
datum· quociens res ad effectum ten
dere uidebatur· tociens illa leuamen
passionis in corpore suo senciebat·
et uice mutata· quociens obnitenci
um contradictione cassari negoci
um cernebatur· tociens ista licet ab
sens intensiore grauamine labora
bat· Aliquando de stratu repente
consurgens· cunctosque reclusionis
angulos et habitacula perambulans·
loqui omnino non poterat· rursum
que ad lectum rediens· deficiente gres
su loquebatur ut prius· Quo lan
guoris genere tunc non solummodo
laborauit· sed quociens cumque fe
minea trepidatione tardasset uel
dubitasset· superne uoluntatis p

agere neg
se capieba
Quod i
cambio a
moguntin
rem elegi
et eum a
vii. absoluit
Tandem
et oct
ne habita
tum his c
lus dereli
ad quam
tionis aff
obuiam
tiguis ui
de plebe
eam cum
nis laudi
suo imm
sibi locum
cuncta di
ta cordis
commissa
les uirgi
bat· et t
denter
ne alien
retur in
donariis
nis eius
sue hab
cio part
proprietat
quia ill

no longer be difficult, but as helpful as possible, his health was immediately restored and he began to assist those preparing the dwellings. With his own hands he pulled out the vines where houses could be built as fitting dwellings for the nuns. But she, for whose departure these dwellings were being prepared, lay almost deprived of the power of locomotion because of the delay in carrying out the divine command. She could not be shifted from the bed in which she lay like a rock, by any means. The Abbot, not having entirely believed the reports, came in to see her. And when he tried with all his strength to lift her head, or to turn her from one side to the other, his efforts were fruitless. Amazed by such an unusual miracle, he realised that it was not human illness, but divine chastisement that was at work. He saw that he should no longer go against the divine command lest he himself should suffer a worse fate. And since the place belonged partly to the canons of Mainz and the land with the church of St Rupert was a possession of Count Bernhard of Hildersheim, a legation was made through the good offices of the faithful and the prescient nun obtained leave to dwell there with her sisters.

VI. That whenever she was ill it was because she was slow in carrying out the commands of her heavenly vision.

So, after long being unable to walk, when it had been decided on both sides that she should be sent, together with her sisters, to the place that she had seen in the spirit, the Abbot went in to her, lying afflicted, and said that she should arise in the name of the Lord and go to the place shown her by heaven. Then wonder and amazement gripped all those who were present when, at the command, she got up as swiftly as if she had had no such long illness. And it was not surprising, since what was seen to occur in the sickroom was no less remarkable. From the time when she received the command to change her place, whenever it seemed that she would win, she felt relief of her bodily suffering and, conversely, whenever it seemed that the business was going against her, with resistance from the other side, although she was not there, she suffered heavier pains. Sometimes, rising suddenly from her bed she would walk through all the rooms and corridors of the convent, entirely unable to speak. Then, returning to bed, unable to walk, she would speak as before. And she suffered this kind of illness not only then, but whenever she delayed or doubted to perform the business of the heavenly will through womanly fear.

agere negocia. hoc certitudinis in
se capiebat argumentum.

Quod locum suum precio et con
cambio a proprietariis absolutum
moguntinum episcopum defenso
rem elegit. iterum quoque correpta sit
et cum ab ecclesia sancti disibodi
XII. absoluit.

Tandem ergo dei famula cum decem
et octo puellis deo sacratis. pristi
ne habitationis loco decedente. quan
tum his quos deserebat doloris et luc
tus derelinquebat. tantum regioni
ad quam accedebat. gaudii et exulta
tionis afferebat. Fuerunt namque illi
obviam de bingiensi oppido et con
tiguis villis multi honoratorum et
de plebe non exigua multitudo. que
eam cum grandi tripudio et divi
nis laudibus exceperunt. At ipsa cum
suo minimo Christi grege pusillo paratum
sibi locum ingressa. divinam que
cuncta dispensat sapientiam. devo
ta cordis alacritate magnificabat. et
commissas tutele sue sanctimonia
les virgines. materno affectu fove
bat. et regularibus institutis pru
denter imbuere non cessabat. Et
ne alieni iuris possessionem vide
retur invasisse vel occupare. de
donatiis fidelium que fama nomi
nis eius adducti deferebant. locum
sue habitationis partim dato pre
cio partim facto concambio. a pro
prietariis predictis obtinuit. Quem
quia liberum suscepit. liberum

manere perpetuo constituit. ita ut
patrocinio tantum moguntine ec
clesie subiectus. non alium quam
sedis ipsius archiepiscopum de
fensorem haberet. ne si sibi laicum
advocatum assumeret. ovili lu
pum inferre videretur. quod fe
re generali modo per orbem plu
rime vexantur ac vastantur ec
clesie. Ergo prelatos cenobii de
quo migraverat. hoc tantum sub
iectionis sibi suisque filiabus re
tinuit. ut que de spiritualibus
hoc est de ordinis tenore et de
monachatus professione queren
da essent. ab eis pocius quam a
liunde susciperent. et pro ut res
et tempus posceret. sacerdotes de
ipso cenobio acciperent. quos pro
pria et libera electione et nomi
natim expetivissent. qui eas tam
in cura animarum. ac divinis
exequendis officiis. quam in tem
poralium procuratione sustenta
rent. Que omnia non solum per
missu vel consulto venerabilis
heinrici atque arnoldi moguntina
ne metropolis archipresulum.
sed et scriptis eorundem. cum
consensu abbatum decreta et
confirmata sunt. et ne quid po
testatis in predia sancti Roberti
sibi usurparet ecclesia sancti
dysibodi privilegiorum aucto
ritate. immo ut pressius dicam
superni numinis interdicto

She understood this as a sure sign.

VII. That, disengaging her place from its owners by payment and exchange, she chose the Bishop of Mainz as advocate, and chastised by an illness, she went and freed it from the monastery of St Disibod.

At last, therefore, the handmaid of the Lord, with eighteen girls consecrated to God, left the site of their original dwelling. She brought to her destination as much pleasure and rejoicing as she left sorrow and mourning to those she was deserting. For many of the elite from the town of Bingen and environs and a great number of the common people received her with much dancing and sacred song. So she entered the place that had been made ready for her with her little flock (or rather, Christ's), and she glorified with devout and heartfelt enthusiasm the divine Wisdom which arranges all things. She cherished the nuns committed to her with maternal affection and did not cease to train them wisely in the precepts of the Rule. And lest it appear that she had entered into or seized another's property she obtained the site of her convent from its owners, partly by direct payment and partly by exchange from the gifts of the faithful, drawn by the fame of her reputation. And since she had entered upon it unencumbered, she decided to maintain it that way in perpetuity. Thus, subject to the Church of Mainz, she would have no one as advocate but the Archbishop of this see. For if she were to appoint for herself a lay steward she might seem to be introducing a wolf into the fold, as many churches throughout the world have been ravaged and plundered by this practice. Towards the heads of the monastery from which she had moved she kept this measure of subjection for herself and her daughters: that they would take counsel about spiritual matters (that is, the observation of the Rule and the monastic profession) from them rather than anyone else. And as far as time and occasion demanded, they would have priests from the monastery whom they would seek by name, elected of their own free choice, to support them both in the cure of souls and the performance of the divine offices and in the management of their temporal affairs. This was done not only with the permission and concurrence of the venerable Henry and Arnold, Archbishops of the See of Mainz, but was also decreed and confirmed in writing by the Archbishops, with the consent of the Abbots. And the monastery of St Disibod was forbidden to misappropriate by any power, the estates of St Rupert, by the authority of the charters, or, rather, by the command of the Supreme Power.

vetitum est. Siquidem hec ipsa virgo dum revelatione intima cognosceret pro tali negocio eundum sibi esse ad idem cenobium ex [...]ione prophete trepidatione quadam detineretur, divine castigationis flagello tacta pene languit usque ad mortem. Quo verbere commonita fecit se in oratorium deportari, ibique se quo deus iubebat ituram, si correptio cessaret, devovit. Deinde pecisse in equo imposita et manibus sustentata deduceretur, mor[...] q ut [...] paxillum deducta est, receptis viribus letabunda procedebat. Perveniens que ad montem prenominati confessoris, cur venire compulsa esset exposuit, atque locum sue habitationis cum allodiis ad se pertinentibus ab illius cenobii fratribus absolvit, relicta illis plurima portione possessionum que illo cum sororibus susceptis tradite fuerant, et insuper pecuniarum non modica quantitate, ne quid usquam iuste querele relinqueretur.

VIII Quod monachice vite servans laborem contemplative partem preelegit meliorem, et quod de speculatione sua scripsit ad Gvibertum monachum gemblocensem.

Verum ut ea [...] que series narrationis exigit repetam, beata hildegardis quamvis in se hec parturientis crebros sustineret dolores, nichilo minus speciose rachelis oculos claros lumine speculationis interne pascebat, et quecumque interius aspexisset, dictis ac scriptis prout noverat expedire pandebat. De quo genere speculandi sive videndi modo, quoniam per iatus ac pluribus etiam excellentium sanctorum noscitur in hac mortalitatis umbra incompertus fuisse, res poscit ut aliqua dicantur, quod ipsius verbis potissimum, quantum vel ipsa pandere potuit, cognoscatur. Sic etenim dixit in epistola quam ad Gvibertum gemblocensem monachum de his que de ea relatu fame audierat sciscitantem rescripsit. Deus inquit ubi vult ad gloriam nominis sui et non terreni hominis operatur. Ego quidem semper trementem timorem habeo, quoniam nullam securitatem ullius possibilitatis in me scio, sed manus meas ad deum porrigo, quatinus velut penna que omni gravedine virium caret et que per ventum volat, ab ipso sustinear. Nec ea que video perfecte scire possum quamdiu in corporali officio sum et in anima invisibili, quoniam in his duobus homini defectus est. Ab infancia autem mea ossibus et nervis ac venis meis non dum confortatis visionem hanc in anima mea usque ad presens tempus semper video, cum iam plus quam septuaginta annorum

Indeed, this nun, when she learned from an internal revelation that she should go to the monastery to negotiate this was held back by fear, like the prophet Jonah. Then, touched by the scourge of divine chastisement she fell ill, almost unto death. Alerted by this torment, she had herself carried into the church and there she vowed to go where God had commanded, if the chastisement ceased. Then she asked to be placed on a horse and was led forth supported by others. And soon, when they had only gone a little distance, her strength returned and she went on her way, rejoicing. Arrived at Disibodenberg, she explained why she had been compelled to come and she disengaged the site of her convent and the allods belonging to it, from the brothers of that monastery. She left to them the major portion of what had been given her by the sisters on entry, together with a substantial amount of money, so that there might remain no just cause for complaint.

VIII. That while keeping to the work of the active life, she chose the better part of contemplation and what she wrote about her vision to the monk Guibert of Gembloux.

But let us return to the blessed Hildegard, whose story this is. She suffered in herself the frequent pains of Leah giving birth, but none the less she feasted beautiful Rachel's clear gaze on the light of internal speculation. And whatever she saw inwardly, she explained in speech and writing as well as she could. We must now say something about this kind of observation or method of seeing, since it was known to be very rare even among numerous excellent saints and hard to comprehend in the shade of mortality. Let us learn from her own words what she herself could reveal about it. She says what follows in a letter to the monk, Guibert of Gembloux, which she wrote when he enquired about the things he had heard tell of her: "God moves where he will", she said, "to glorify his name and not mortal man's. Therefore I always feel a quaking dread since I am never certain of any ability in myself. But I put forth my hands to God, to be sustained by Him like a feather, which, lacking power and strength, flies on the wind. And the things that I see, I cannot fully comprehend while I am in my bodily charge, with an invisible soul, since man is deficient in these two things. From my infancy, when my bones, nerves and veins had not yet grown strong, I have ever had this vision in my soul, even till now when I am more than seventy years old.

sim: anima quoque mea prout deus uult in hac uisione sursum in altitudinem firmamenti et in uicissitudine diuersi aeris ascendit. atque inter diuersos populos se dilatat quamuis in longinquis regionibus et locis a me remoti sint. Et quoniam hec tali modo in anima mea uideo. idcirco etiam secundum uicissitudinem nubium. et aliarum creaturarum ea conspicio. Ista autem nec exterioribus oculis uideo. nec exterioribus auribus audio. nec cogitationibus cordis mei. nec ulla collatione quinque sensuum meorum percipio. sed tantum in anima mea apertis exterioribus oculis ita quod numquam in eis defectum extasis passa sum. sed uigilanter die ac nocte ea uideo.

Quod speculationis modum mirum habuit et ualde rarum. et quod modo in actiua modo desudabat in contemplatiua.

Itaque sicut ex uerbis precedentibus colligimus. uere mirus et perrarus huic sancte uirgini speculationis affuit modus. Nempe ad similitudinem sanctorum animalium que uidit iezechiel. ipsa certe pennatum animal ibat et non reuertebatur. et iterum ibat et reuertebatur. quia ab actiua uita quam apprehenderat. ad quelibet infima non reuertebatur. et a contemplatiua quam carne obsita iugiter tenere non poterat. in actiuam uitam reuertebatur. Quasi enim ei de actiue uite modo diceret deus. non te deseram neque derelinquam. a bono proposito non permisit eam redire. et iterum quasi de contemplatiue uite modo ei diceret. auerte oculos tuos quia ipsi me auolare fecerunt. de speculatione sue incomprehensibilis maiestatis ad actualis uite laborem eam permisit redire. Auerte inquit oculos tuos a mea contemplatione. quia ipsi me auolare faciunt. dum me in hac uita ad perfectum comprehendere non sufficiunt. Unde et psalmista ait. Accedet homo ad cor altum et exaltabitur deus. quia quo altius puro corde queritur. eo sublimius quam sit incomprehensibilis comprehenditur. Eo modo beata uirgo in carne adhuc posita. et per actiuam laborabat. et per contemplatiuam in ipsa inaccessibilem diuinitatis lucem totis desiderijs inhiabat. Sed hic primo libro ponentes terminum. benedicamus dominum. qui ancillam suam ab ipso ortus sui principio electam respexit. et eam dilectam usque ad claritatem uisionis sue prouexit.

Explicit liber primus uite sancte hildegardis.

Incipit prologus in librum secundum.

My spirit, when God wills, ascends in this vision to the height of the firmament, through the changes of the various airs and extends itself among people of many kinds, albeit in distant regions and places far from me. And as I see these things in my soul like this, I also view them in the permutations of clouds and other created things. But I do not see these things with my bodily eyes, nor hear them with my external ears, nor do I perceive them with the thoughts of my heart, nor any combination of the five senses. Rather, I see them entirely in my soul, wide awake, by day and night, with my bodily eyes open, so that I never experienced their failure in a trance."

IX. That she had a wonderful and exceedingly rare manner of seeing and that she lived both the active and contemplative lives.

Thus, a truly wonderful and rare kind of vision was present in the holy nun, as we may gather from the preceding words. Indeed, like the holy beasts that Ezekiel saw, she too went like a winged creature and did not turn back. And again, she went and returned because she did not turn from the active life that she had embraced to something worse; and from the contemplative, which hampered by her body, she could not always maintain, she would return to the active life. It was as if God spoke to her about the active life in these words: "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." He would not allow her to abandon her good intentions. And again, as if about the contemplative life he would say: "Turn away thine eyes from me since they made me flee", allowing her to return to the work of real life from the vision of his incomprehensible majesty."Turn away thine eyes from my contemplation", he said, "for they make me flee, since thou canst not properly comprehend me in this life." And the Psalmist said: "Man lifts his heart to the height and God is exalted", because the higher the seeking with pure heart, the more profound the understanding of incomprehensibility. In this way, the blessed nun, while yet in the flesh, laboured both in the active life and through the contemplative life, and gazed with heartfelt desire at that inaccessible light of divinity. But putting an end to this first book let us praise the Lord who was mindful of his handmaid, singled out from the very beginning, and who advanced his beloved to the clarity of his vision.

Here ends the first book of the Life of St Hildegard. Here begins the prologue of the second book.

GRAN
DEM
quidem
materiā
ingenia
parua
non suf
ferunt.
sed kari
tas et obedientia quibus me to
tum semper uobis debere profi
teor. Lodowice et Godefride. abba
tes optimi. mentem meam etiam
ad impossibilem facultatem extulerunt. Unde quā
uis nullo fretus ingenio. tamen
preceptis uestris in karitate xp̄i
obtemperaui. et libellum secun
dum de uita beate hildegardis
uirginis. secretis et archanis ui
sionibus. quasi quibusdam ame
nis floribus respersum. ab eo lo
co quo precedentem librum. Go
defridus bone memorie termina
uit. ordinare et perficere deo fa
uente curaui. In quo ex uerbis
ipsius deo dilecte uirginis. tan
ta elucet claritas prophetie.
ut nichil minus ab antiquis
patribus uideatur percepisse
gratie. Nempe sicut legitur
de moyse. quod indesinenter
fuerit in tabernaculo. sic et
ipsa in uisionum celestium mo
rabatur umbraculo. uidelicet
ut sicut ille. sic ista a deo aut
aliquid disceret. aut auditores
suos aliquid doceret. An non mo
rabatur in celesti tabernaculo. et
transcenderat nebulam tocius car
nalitatis. cum dictatum et uerba
ewangelii iohannis in principio
erat uerbum. et cetera eam docuit
spiritus ueritatis. Ipse enim
spiritus sanctus qui in cor iohan
nis profluxit. quando hanc pro
fundissimam reuelationem de pec
tore ihu suxit. p diuinam sue
dignationis graciam. hoc istam uo
luit discere. quod ille dignus fuit
dicere. Sed de his interim loqui
differamus. et proposita aspiran
te ipso eodem spiritu disseramus.
Nec moueat lectorem. quod que
dam que in precedenti libro uite
eius prescripta sunt. eadem in
subsequenti etiam opere uisionū
eius nichilominus descripta st.
quia dignum iudicauimus. ut
equalitas ordinis in recitatione
hystorie eius seruaretur. et auc
toritas uel integritas uerborum
que per spiritum sanctum pro
lata sunt. in descriptione uisio
num eius nullatenus mutila
retur. In primis autem et huic
libello capitula prefigurantur.
ut locis suis ea que secuntur.
facilius inueniantur.
Explicit prologus

Incipit secun
inserte sunt u
gardis uirgin
De his que se
et lingua inso
quis ea grami
IGITUR beata
quem iussu di
librum uision
apud montem
choauerat con
de natura ho
diuersarum q
quomodo hom
dum sit. alia
phetico spiritu
etiam quam e
diuersis prou
responderit.
eius ex reuela
altius conside
autem in uni
te. et sue et
destinate. Q
quod cantum
mirabili pro
teras prius
edidit antea
hec ewangel
alias q; typ
posuit. que
dauid aper
claudit. cla
gratulari
me sue lu
cellaria su

Small wit will not support great matters; but love and obedience, with which I profess to be ever and entirely indebted to you, Ludwig and Godfrey, best of abbots, advances my mind from impossibility to the realms of the possible. So, though trusting in no natural ability, I have obeyed your instructions in the love of Christ. I have taken care to write and complete, God willing, the second book of the Life of the blessed nun Hildegard, strewn with secret and mysterious visions as if with sweet flowers, from the point where Godfrey, of happy memory, finished the previous book. In this such great prophetic brilliance shines forth from the words of this nun, beloved of God, that she seems to have been granted no less grace than the Fathers of old. Indeed, as we read that Moses was frequently in the tabernacle, so she used to spend time in the shelter of heavenly visions so that like him she could either learn something from God or teach her listeners something. Did she not remain in the heavenly tabernacle and transcend the darkness of all carnality when the spirit of truth taught her the words and sayings of St John's Gospel: "In the beginning was the word..."? For that same Holy Spirit, which flowed into John's heart when he sucked this most profound revelation at the breast of Jesus, wished to teach her by the divine grace of his esteem, what he was worthy to say. But let us put off speaking about this for the present and discuss our theme, inspired by the same spirit. And let the reader not be troubled that some things that were written in the previous book of her life are nonetheless described in the subsequent book of her visions. We considered it fitting that the manner of the arrangement of the story of her life be conserved and that the authority or integrity of the words uttered through the Holy Spirit should in no way be altered in the description of her visions. First of all the chapters of the book are listed, so that what follows may be more easily found in their places.

End of the prologue.

I. Incipit secundus liber in quo inserte sunt visiones sancte Hildegardis virginis. Primum capitulum. De his que scripto cum litteris et lingua insolita expressit et quis ea grammatice disposuerit.

Igitur beata virgo in loco ad quem iussu divino migraverat, librum visionum suarum quem apud montem sancti Dysibodi inchoaverat consummavit et quedam de natura hominis ac elementorum diversarumque creaturarum, et quomodo homini ex his succurrendum sit, aliaque multa secreta prophetico spiritu manifestavit. Patet etiam quam eleganter epistolis de diversis provinciis ad se directis responderit, si quis tenorem verborum eius ex revelatione divina prolatorum altius considerare voluerit. Sunt autem in unum volumen compilate et sue et ille que ad se fuerant destinate. Quis vero non miretur quod cantum dulcissime melodie mirabili protulit symphonia et litteras prius non visas cum lingua edidit antea inaudita. Preter hec evangelia quedam exposuit aliasque typicas expositiones composuit. Que omnia quia ei clavis David aperuit, qui aperit et nemo claudit, claudit et nemo aperit, gratulari merito et cantare anime sue licuit, quod eam rex in cellaria sua introduxerit, ut inebriaretur ab ubertate domus sue: unde et ipsa sicut scriptum est a timore domini concipiens pareret et spiritum salutis super terram faceret. Magnum etiam illud et admiratione dignum quod ea que in spiritu vidit vel audivit eodem sensu et eisdem verbis circumspecta et pura mente manu propria scripsit et edidit, uno solo viro fideli symmista contenta, qui ad evidentiam grammatice artis quam ipsa nesciebat casus tempora et genera quidem disponere, sed ad sensum vel intellectum eorum nichil omnino addere presumebat vel demere. Ut hoc certe etiam ad Adrianum papam scripsit, quod sic in celesti visione sibi dictum audivit: Cum desuper tibi ostensa ad formam humane consuetudinis non protuleris in latina lingua, quia hec consuetudo tibi non est data, ille qui limam habet ad aptum sonum hominum explere non negligat.

Quod in prima visione de suo scribit timore et de pape benedictione et scribendi permis[sione]. II.

Congruum autem visione videtur ut hoc in loco scripta visionum eius aliqua inseram, et ex his quam convenienter sententia illa de canticis: Dilectus meus misit manum suam per

Here begins the second book in which the visions of the holy nun Hildegard are included.

I. Concerning the things which she expressed in writing, song, letters and an unknown language and who set them in grammatical order.

Therefore the blessed nun completed the book of her visions which she had begun at Disibodenberg, in the place to which she had moved as a result of the divine command. She elucidated things about the nature of man, the elements and different creatures and how man is to be helped by them, together with many other secrets, all in a spirit of prophecy. It is also clear that she replied judiciously to many letters sent her from diverse provinces if anyone wished to examine more fully the manner of her words stemming from divine revelation. They are collected in one volume, both hers and those which had been sent to her. Who would not marvel that she wrote song with wonderful harmony of the sweetest melody, and she penned letters previously unseen and a language not before heard? As well as this, she expounded some of the Evangelists and composed other symbolic exegeses. Her soul was allowed to give thanks and sing deservedly since the key of David which opens what no one closes, and closes what no one opens, unlocked all these things for her. The king led her to his wine cellar so that she might imbibe the bounty of his house. Then she, as it is written, receiving these things in the fear of the Lord, obeyed and spread the spirit of salvation throughout the earth. And it it is indeed worthy of admiration that the things which she saw or heard in the spirit, with a careful and pure mind, she wrote down with her own hand and delivered in the same words and sense. She was content with one man, her faithful secretary, who, according to the rules of the art of grammar, of which she was ignorant, undertook to see to the cases, tenses and gender. But he did not presume to add to or subtract anything at all from their meaning and significance. Indeed she wrote what she had heard about this in a heavenly vision to Pope Adrian: "Since you cannot offer what has been revealed to you from above in the form usual among men - the Latin language - let him who has the file not fail to render it fit for the ears of men."

II. What she wrote in the first vision about her fear, and the Pope's blessing and permission to write.

It seems fitting to insert at this point some extracts from her visions. From them let us see how aptly the words of the Canticles

foramen et uenter meus intremu
it ad tactum eius sibi ad aptari
queat uideamus. Hec scripta ita
se habentia
Prima uisio
In mystica inquit uisione et in
lumine karitatis de sapiencia
que nunquam deficiet. uerba
hec sic audiui et uidi. Quinque
toni iusticie humano generi a
deo missi intonant. in quibus
salus et redemptio credencium
consistit. Et hij quinque toni excel
lenciores omnibus operibus ho
minum sunt. quia omnia opera
hominum ex his nutriuntur.
qui sunt qui in sonis non eunt.
sed cum quibus omnia opera ho
minis in quinque sensibus cor
poris eius perficiuntur. Et de
illis talis ratio est. Primus to
nus per fidele abel sacrificium.
quod deo immolauit opere com
pletus est. secundus autem quan
do noe per preceptum dei archam
edificauit. Tercius uero per moy
sen. quando ei lex data est. que
preceptum circumcisionis abrahe
fuit. Sed in quarto tono uerbum
summi patris in uirginis ute
rum descendit et carnem induit.
quia idem uerbum cum aqua
limum coagulauerat. et sic ho
minem formauerat. unde et om
nis creatura per hominem ad
ipsum clamauit. qui eam fece
rat. sic quod propter hominem deus
omnia in se portauit. Alio enim
tempore hominem creauit. alio
autem ipsum portauit. ut omnes
quos consilium serpentis perdiderat.
sibi adtraheret. Quintus autem to
nus perficietur. cum omnis error
et irrisio finietur. et tunc homines
uidebunt et cognoscent quod nul
lus contra deum quicquam facere
possit. Hoc modo in quinque tonis a
deo missis uetus et nouum testamen
tum perficietur. ac mirificus nume
rus hominum complebitur. Et post
hos quinque tonos filio dei quoddam
lucidum tempus dabitur. ita quod
ab omni carne palam cognoscetur.
Postea diuinitas in semetipsa ope
rabitur. quam diu uult.

Sapiencia quoque in lumine carita
tis docet et iubet me dicere. quo
modo in hanc uisionem constituta
sim. Et ego uerba hec non dico de
me. sed uera sapiencia dicit ista de
me. et sic loquitur ad me. Audi o
homo uerba hec et dic ea non se
cundum te. sed secundum me. et
docta per me. hoc modo dic de te.
In prima formatione mea cum
deus in utero matris mee spiracu
lo uite suscitauit me. uisionem
istam infixit anime mee. Nam
post incarnationem christi anno mil
lesimo centesimo. doctrina aposto
lorum et ardens iusticia. quam in
christianis et spiritualibus constitu

erat tardare
tebatur. Iu
et parentes
uouebant.
tantum lu
contremuit
nichil prof
anno meo u
nem deo ob
tum decim
dens. et plu
ita quod et
audierunt
essent. Tun
rata sum. q
mea hec ui
habui. et q
audiui. at
ma mea u
multa que e
quenti eg
tris mee h
carnem m
uires mee
tigata a q
ui. si aliqu
uideret. e
dit. quoni
Tunc mag
ausa eram
re. sed ta
tando. de
re. Et qu
perfunde
bus alie
uis uisio

apply to her:"My beloved put his hand to the opening and my bowels were moved at his touch." These are the writings:

First vision. In a mystic vision, in the light of charity, I saw and heard these words from the Wisdom which never fails: The salvation and redemption of all believers abides in the sounding of the five chords of justice for mankind, sent by God. And these five chords are superior to all the works of men since all such works are nourished by them. They are what does not depart in the sound but with which all the works of men are accomplished in the five senses of his body. And this is the reason for it. The first chord was completed in its performance by the sacrifice which Abel faithfully made to God. The second was when Noah built the ark, following the instructions of God. The third was through Moses when the Law was given him which was the condition of Abraham's circumcision. But in the fourth chord the Word of the almighty Father descended into the virgin's womb and took on flesh, since that same Word had formed man by mixing clay with water. Thus every creature cried out through the man to him who made it. And thus on account of man, God carries all things in himself. At one time he created man, at another he bore him, so that he might draw to himself all those whom the counsel of the serpent condemned. The fifth chord will be completed when all error and mockery is ended and then men will see and understand that none can prevail against God. Thus, in five chords sent by God, the Old and New Testaments will be fulfilled and the marvelous number of men completed. And on the completion of these five chords the Son of God will be given a certain time of light, so that he may be clearly recognised by all mortals. After that the divinity will work at his own concerns for as long as he wishes.

Wisdom teaches in the light of Love and bids me say how I was established in this my vision. And it is not I who say these words about myself, but true Wisdom says them about me, telling me this: Hear these words, O man, and say them not according to yourself, but according to me. Explain yourself thus, at my teaching. When I was first formed and God roused me with the breath of life in my mother's womb he implanted this vision in my soul. For, in the eleven hundredth year after the incarnation of Christ, the teachings of the apostles and the burning justice which he had placed in Christians and the religious

erat tardare cepit. et in hebetationem uer
tebatur. Illis temporibus nata sum.
et parentes mei cum suspiriis deo me
uouebant. ac tercio etatis mee anno
tantum lumen uidi quod anima mea
contremuit. sed pre infancia de his
nichil proferre potui. In octauo autem
anno meo in spiritualem conuersatio
nem deo oblata sum. et usque in quin
tum decimum annum fui multa ui
dens. et plura simpliciter loquens.
ita quod et admirabantur qui hec
audierunt. unde uenirent et a quo
essent. Tunc et ego in me ipsa admi
rata sum. quod cum infra in anima
mea hec uiderem exteriorem etiam uisum
habui. et quod hoc de nullo homine
audiui. atque uisionem quam in ani
ma mea uidi quantum potui celaui.
multa que exteriora ignoraui. de fre
quenti egritudine quam a lacte ma
tris mee hucusque passa sum. que
carnem meam macerauit. et ex qua
uires mee defecerunt. His ualde fa
tigata a quadam nutrice mea quesi
ui si aliqua exceptis exterioribus
uideret. et nichil michi inde respon
dit. quoniam nichil horum uidebat.
Tunc magno timore correpta non
ausa eram hec cuiquam manifesta
re. sed tamen plura loquendo. dic
tando de futuris solebam enarra
re. Et quando hac uisione plenius
perfundebar. multa que audienti
bus aliena erant loquebar. sed cum
uis uisionis aliquantum cessit in

qua me plus secundum mores in
fantis. quam secundum annos eta
tis mee exhibui ualde erubui et
sepe fleui et multociens libenter
tacuissem si michi licuisset. Pre
timore autem quem ad homines
habebam. quomodo uiderem nulli
dicere audebam. Sed quedam nobi
lis femina cuius disciplinae era
subdita hec notauit. et cuidam si
bi noto monacho aperuit. Istius uero
femine deus per graciam suam
quasi riuulum ex multis aquis
infudit. ita quod corpori suo in ui
giliis. ieiuniis. et ceteris bonis o
peribus quietem non tribuit. quo
usque bono fine presentem uitam
finiuit. cuius etiam merita deus
per quedam pulchra ostendit signa.
Post cuius finem ita permansi ui
dens. in quadragesimum etatis
mee annum.

Tunc in eadem uisione magna
pressura dolorum coacta sum
palam manifestare que uideram.
et audieram. sed ualde timui et e
rubui proferre que tam diu silue
ram. Vene autem et medulle mee
tunc plene uirium erant in qui
bus ab infancia et iuuentute mea
defectum habebam. Ista cuidam
monacho magistro meo intimaui.
qui bone conuersationis et diligen
tis intencionis ac ueluti peregri
nus a sciscitationibus morum
multorum hominum erat. unde

began to grow sluggish and turn to vacillation. In such times was I born and my parents pledged me to God with sighs. In the third year of my life I saw such a great light that my soul quaked, but because I was an infant I could not reveal anything of it. In my eighth year I was offered to God for the spiritual life. Until my fifteenth year I saw much and spoke many things in my simplicity, so that those who heard these things wondered whence and from whom they came. Then I began to wonder at myself, because while I saw inwardly in my soul I still kept my external sight. And because I had heard this about no one else, I concealed the vision I saw in my soul as far as I could. I was ignorant about many outside things because of the frequent illness I suffered from the time that I was a babe unweaned to the present, which wasted my body and depleted my strength. Worn out by this I asked a nurse of mine if she could see anything beside externals and she answered "Nothing", since she saw none of these things. Then, seized by great fear I dared not reveal these things to anyone but I used to repeat much about the future in conversation, and when I was filled with this vision I said many things that were strange to the hearers. But when the strength of the vision - in which I behaved more childishly than my years - lessened somewhat, I blushed profusely, and often wept, and on many occasions I would gladly have kept silent, had I been allowed. Yet, because of the fear that I had of others, I dared not describe the manner of my vision. But a certain noble woman, to whose care I had been entrusted, noticed this and disclosed it to a monk of her acquaintance. God infused this woman with his grace like a river of many waters so that she gave her body no respite, with vigils, fasts and other good works until she crowned the present life with a good death. God indicated her merits by certain lovely signs. After her death I continued to have visions till my fortieth year. Then in that same vision I was compelled by most painful pressure to reveal openly what I had seen and heard. But I was very fearful and ashamed to publish what I had kept silent for so long. Still, my veins and marrows were then full of vigour, which I lacked in infancy and youth.
I confided this to my mentor, a monk of upright life and scrupulous intentions, far removed from the vain inquisitiveness of so many other people, who willingly gave ear to the miracle. Amazed, he urged me to write down these things in secret, till he could ascertain their nature

[illegible] eadem miracula libenter audiebat. [illegible] michi innuerit. [illegible] scriberem. donec uideret [illegible] unde essent. In[illegible] autem quod a deo essent. abbati suo intimauit. magno que [illegible] deinceps in his metum laborauit. In eadem uisione scripta prophetarum euangeliorum et aliorum sanctorum et quorundam philosophorum sine ulla humana doctrina intellexi. ac quedam ex illis exposui. cum uix notitiam litterarum haberem. sicut indocta mulier me docuerat. Sed et cantum cum melodia in laude dei et sanctorum absque doctrina ullius hominis protuli et cantaui. cum numquam uel neumam uel cantum aliquem didicissem. Hec ad audienciam moguntine ecclesie allata cum essent et discussa. omnes ex deo esse dixerunt. et ex prophecia quam olim prophete prophetauerant. Deinde scripta mea eugenio pape cum treveri esset. sunt allata. qui ea gratanter coram plurimis legi fecit. ac per se ipsum legit. multumque de gratia dei confidens. benedictionemque suam cum litteris michi mittens. precepit. ut ea que in uisione uiderem uel audirem: scriptis adtencius commendarem.

De sentencia libri cantici canticorum quod frequenter tangebatur per spiritum. ·III·

Itaque ex hac beate uirginis pulcherrima uisione: et sui timoris quem ad accessum spiritus sancti capiebat recitatione: de apostolici quoque benedictione: et de percepta ab eo scribendi permissione. patenter colligimus. quod ille dilectus suus sponsus celestis ihesus christus uere misit manum suam id est operationem et inspirationem spiritus sancti per foramen. hoc est per occultam graciam suam. et uenter eius. scilicet mens sua. ad tactum eius. hoc est ad infusionem gratie sue intremuit. ob insolitum uigorem spiritus et pondus quod interius sensit. Quid aptius. quid conueniencius. Certe sicut per illum in helya sibilum aure tenuem frequencior uisitatio signatur. ita diuini spiritus saporem tociens degustabat mens eius. quociens in contemplationis sublimitate suspendebatur. Et quid fecit. Surrexi inquit ut aperirem dilecto meo. O uere beata uirgo que sicut scriptum est quia dilexit cordis mundiciam propter graciam labiorum suorum habet amicum regem. id est christum. a quo tale percepit donum. Secundum mensuram enim quam sibi dare spiritus sanctus uoluit. nam sicut spirat ubi uult. sic etiam diuidit singulis prout uult. quin surgeret et dilecto aperiret. recusare non potuit. et nunc uoce: nec

litteris. pe
dilecto. fo
tus audiu
Obuientiu
plateis aqu
Quod ad
audita me
lauit et m
Igitur dum
operum ru
paradisi flu
non modo u
omnis trip
na conflue
usque seruus
bus per gr
affatim ac
exhortamin
imarum s
et soluebat
scripturar
ab ea perc
poralium
nulli quo
alanguori
uero proph
nes et inti
noscebat.
uola men
tandum a
qui dum
non ualet
emendati
cepto desi
ad se uen
nis. conu

and source. Then, realising that they were from God, he informed his abbot and from that time he worked insatiably at this with me. In that same vision I understood, without any human teaching, the writings of the prophets, the evangelists and of other holy men and those of certain philosophers. And I expounded certain matters in them, although I scarcely had a literary knowledge, since an unlearned woman had been my teacher. I also produced and sang songs with melodies in praise of God and his saints although I had never been taught musical notation or any kind of singing. When these things were brought to the attention of the church of Mainz and discussed, all agreed that they were from God and the gift of prophecy which the prophets spoke forth in former times. Then my writings were brought to Pope Eugenius, when he was in Trier, and he had them read out in the presence of many, with pleasure. He also read them for himself and trusting much in the grace of God, sent me his blessing with a letter and instructed that I should commit to writing, even more carefully, what I might see or hear in my vision.

III. Concerning the meaning of the Song of Songs - that she was often touched by the Spirit.

Therefore, from this most excellent vision of the blessed nun and the description of the fear that seized her at the approach of the Holy Spirit and from the papal benediction and permission to write we clearly see the following: that her beloved heavenly bridegroom, Jesus Christ, indeed put his hand, that is, the working and inspiration of the Holy Spirit, on the opening is, on his hidden grace, and her bowels, that is to say, her mind, were moved at his touch, that is, at the infusion of his grace, because of the unaccustomed strength and force of the spirit which she felt within. What could be more fitting or appropriate? Indeed, just as in Elijah the visitation is quite often represented by a soft breath of air, so her mind tasted the savour of the divine spirit as often as it was raised up in the loftiness of contemplation. And what did she do? "I rose up to open to my beloved", she said. O truly blessed virgin, who, as it is written, "because she loveth pureness of heart, for the grace of her lips the king shall be her friend", that is Christ, from whom she received such a gift. Now according to the measure which the Holy Spirit wished to grant, for just as he bloweth where he listeth, so also he divideth to everyman severally as he will, she could not refuse

litteris. pessulum ostii sui aperiens
dilecto: foris exequebatur quod in
tus audiuit. Quid intus audiuit.
Deriuentur foras fontes tui. et in
plateis aquas tuas diuide:

Quod ad se uenientes exhortans
addita monitum humiliter propa
lauit et meritorum.

Igitur dum ad hunc modum bonorum
operum riuis affluentibus. quasi
paradisi fluminibus irrigaretur.
non modo tota uicinia. uerum etiam
omnis tripertita gallia. atque germa
nia confluebant ad eam undique. utri
usque sexus populorum examina. qui
bus per gratiam dei utriusque uite
affatim accommoda impendebat
exhortamina. Ad salutem enim ani
marum suarum: proponebat eis
et soluebat questiones sanctarum
scripturarum. Plurimi consilium
ab ea percipiebant necessitatium cor
poralium quas patiebantur. non
nulli quoque benedictionibus suis.
a languoribus alleuiabantur. Quia
uero prophetico spiritu cogitatio
nes et intentiones hominum cog
noscebat. quosdam peruersa et fri
uola mente ad se quasi ad explo
randum accedentes redarguebat.
qui dum spiritui qui loquebatur
non ualerent resistere. correpti et
emendati. cogebantur a prauo in
cepto desistere: Sed et iudeos dum
ad se uenirent causa interrogatio
nis. conuictos de lege sua ad christi

fidem exhortabatur uerbis pie
ammonitionis. Omnibus enim
iuxta apostolum omnia facta. ex
traneis quidem aduenientibus.
quamuis reprehensibiles [illegible]
de et leniter prout eis [illegible]
competere loquebatur. Secum au
tem commorantes puellas cum
multo dilectionis ac materne
dulcedinis affectu castigabat.
quociens uel rancor cuiuslibet
controuersie. uel dolor secularis
tristicie. siue desidia aut negli
gencia in eis oriebatur. Denique
uoluntates. intentiones et cogi
tationes earum. intantum perspi
ciebat. quod in officiis etiam di
uinis. secundum qualitatem
cordis sui. propriis benedictioni
bus eis respondebat. Preuide
bat enim in spiritu uitam ho
minum. et conuersationem. nec
non et uite presentis quorum
dam consummationem. ac se
cundum qualitatem morum et
meritorum gloriam et penas
animarum eorum. que tamen
tanta mysteria nulli preter illi
soli homini reuelabat. cui ut
prediximus omnia secreta sua ma
nifestabat. Sicut denique tempus
tacendi. ita nouerat quid. et ubi.
et cui. et cur. et quomodo. et quan
do. tempus esset loquendi. In
his autem omnibus summam
omnium uirtutum seruabat.

to arise and open to her beloved. And now in words, and now in writing, opening the lock of the door to her beloved she broadcast outside what she had heard within. And what did she hear within? "Let thy fountains be dispersed abroad, and rivers of waters in the streets".

IV. That exhorting those who came to her, she revealed the hidden aspects of their minds and merits.

Therefore, while engaged in these kinds of good works, not only the whole neighbourhood was watered by flowing streams like the rivers of Paradise, but men and women flocked to her from all of Tripartite Gaul and Germany. She bestowed abundant exhortations on these people, fitting to the condition of each. For the health of their souls she proposed and solved for them many questions of sacred scripture. Many consulted her about bodily afflictions from which they suffered and some were relieved of their illnesses by her blessings. Because she understood in the true prophetic spirit the thoughts and purposes of men, she refuted some who came to her with perverse and frivolous minds, as if to test her. When they could not resist the spirit that was speaking, rebuked and reformed, they were obliged to desist from their wicked course. And she even exhorted the Jews, when they came to argue with her convinced of their own Law, to the faith of Christ, with words of devout admonition. So she was, in the words of the Apostle, "all things to all men". To strangers who came to see her, although they could have been censured, she spoke mildly and kindly, as far as it seemed their due. She reproved the young nuns living with her very agreeably and with maternal sweetness whenever the bitterness of a dispute of any kind, or the sadness of earthly grief, or idleness or heedlessness arose among them. In short, she saw through their desires, intentions and thoughts to such an extent, that even in the divine office, she responded with the appropriate blessing according to the state of their souls. And she foresaw in the spirit, the life and conduct of men, not only the consummation of the present life of certain people, but the glory and punishment of their souls according to their behaviour and deserts. But she never revealed such a great mystery to anyone, except only to that man who received all her secrets, as we said above. And just as she knew when it was time to keep silent, so she knew what and where and to whom and why and how and

humilitatem et sciens quia deus superbis resistit humilibus autem dat gratiam semper gracie divine omnimodam laudabat benignitatem.

De secunda visione pro qua cecitas eam incurrit quia eam celavit. Et quod multa adversa pertulit.

Talentis ac talibus graciarum adornatam dotalibus. sponsus celestis sponsam suam dilectam licet crebris inviseret visitationibus: tamen ut sicut sicut scriptum est. quanto magna erat humiliaret se in omnibus. permisit eam sepe variis egritudinum vexari passionibus. Quod ut evidencius pateat. textus visionum eius producatur in medium. ut et virtus in infirmitate perfecta non lateat. et lectoris etiam dum alternis vicibus delectatur. allevietur tedium. Vis scire quid perpessa fuerit. pro eo quod non manifestaverit ostensam sibi celitus visionem. propter suam de loco in quo tunc erat in alium transmigrationem. Audi ipsam ita scribentem.

Visio secunda.

Quodam inquit tempore ex caligine oculorum nullum lumen videbam. tantoque pondere corporis deprimebar. quod sublevari non valens. in doloribus maximis occupata iacebam. Que ideo passa sum. quia non manifestavi visionem que michi ostensa fuit. quod de loco in quo deo oblata fueram in alium cum puellis meis moveri deberem. Hec tamdiu sustinui. donec locum in quo nunc sum nominavi. et illico visu recepto levius quidem habui. sed tamen infirmitate non dum ad plenum carui. Abbas autem meus et fratres et populus eiusdem provincie: cum percepissent de hac mutatione. quid hoc esset quod de pinguedine agrorum et vinearum. et de amenitate loci illius. ad inaquosa. ubi nulla essent commoda ire vellemus mirum habuerunt. et ne hoc fieret. sed ut nobis resisterent. invicem conspiraverunt. Me quoque quadam vanitate deceptam esse dicebant. Cumque hec audissem. cor meum contritum est. et caro mea et vene aruerunt. et per dies plurimos lecto decumbens. vocem magnam audivi. me prohibentem nequaquam amplius in loco illo de visione hac proferrem vel scriberem. Tunc quedam nobilis marchionissa nobis nota. archiepiscopum moguntinum adiit. et ei hec omnia. aliisque sapientibus manifestavit. Qui dixerunt quod nullus, nisi per bona opera sanctificaretur. unde et hoc ut fieret conveniens videretur. Itaque permissione archiepiscopi. cum magno comitatu proximorum nostrorum. et aliorum hominum. in reverencia dei ad locum istum venimus.

when it was time to speak. In all this she maintained the highest virtue of all - humility. And knowing that God resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble, she always praised the almighty goodness of divine grace.

V. About the second vision for which she suffered blindness when she hid it, and that she endured many hardships.

With such a mighty and extensive dowry of graces did the heavenly bridegroom adorn his beloved bride, although he also inflicted many trials on her. But he allowed her to be often visited with various pains of illness, because, since she was great, she should humble herself in all things, as it is written. To make this clearer, let the words of her own vision be set down publicly so that her strength, perfected in weakness, will not be hidden and the boredom of the reader will be lightened while he delights in variation. Do you know what suffering she endured because she did not make known the vision shown her from above about her removal from the place where she was to another? Hear what she wrote herself.

Second Vision.

"At a certain time", she said,"because of the dimness of my eyes, I could see no light. Oppressed by the great weight of my body, I was unable to get up and I lay gripped by extreme pains. I suffered these things because I did not make known the vision which had been shown to me: to move from the place in which I had been offered to God, to another, with my nuns. I bore these things until I named the place in which I am now, and at once I regained my sight and had some relief, although I was not entirely free from illness. But when my abbot and the brothers and people of the province understood what sort of change this was to be - that we wished to go from lush fields and vineyards and the comforts of home to a desert place without amenities - they were amazed and they conspired together to prevent this and thwart us. They also said that I was deceived by some illusion. When I heard this my heart was broken, my flesh and veins dried up, and lying for many days upon my bed, I heard a great voice forbidding me to say or write anything more in that place about this vision. Then a certain noble marchioness, known to us, went to the Archbishop of Mainz and revealed all this to him and other wise men. They said that no place is sanctified unless by good works and so it seemed fitting that it should

Tunc antiquus deceptor per
multas irrisiones me exercitavit.
ita quod multi dixerunt.
Quid est hoc quod huic stulte et
indocte femine tot mysteria revelantur.
cum multi fortes et sapientes
viri sint. In dispersionem
itaque vertetur. Multi enim de
revelatione ammirabantur. utrum
a deo esset. an de inaquositate aeriorum
spirituum. qui multos seducunt.
Et ita in isto loco cum viginti
puellis nobilibus et de divitibus
parentibus natis mansimus.
Nullamque habitationem seu habitatorem
hic invenimus. excepto
veterano quodam et uxore eius ac
filiis. Tanta quoque adversitas tribulationum
et pressura laborum
super me cecidit. velut cum tempestuosa
nubes solem obtegit. ita
quod valde suspirans et lacrimas
fundens dixi. O o deus nullum
confundit. qui in ipsum confidit.
Sed iterum deus graciam suam
michi adhibuit. quemadmodum
cum sol recedentibus nubibus
apparet. et veluti cum mater
flenti infanti lac prebet. unde
ille post fletum gaudet. Tunc
in vera visione vidi. quod tribulationes
iste in exemplo moysi
super me venissent. quia cum
ille filios israhel de egypto trans
mare rubrum duceret in desertum.
ipsi contra deum murmurantes.
moysen quoque valde afflixerunt.
quamvis eos deus
mirificis signis illustrasset. Ita
deus aliqua parte me affligi
permisit. a communi populo. a
propinquis meis. et ab aliquantis
que mecum manserunt. cum
eis necessaria defuerunt. nisi
quantum nobis per graciam dei
in elemosinis dabatur. quia sicut
filii israhel moysen afflixerunt.
ita et isti super me caput
moventes dixerunt. Quid prodest
quod nobiles et divites puelle
de loco in quo eis nichil defuit
in tantam penuriam devenerunt.
Nos vero graciam
dei nobis succurrere expectabamus.
qui hunc locum nobis
ostenderat.

Post pressuram doloris huius.
graciam suam deus super
nos pluit. Nam multi qui nos
prius contempnentes inaquosam
inutilitatem nominaverant. venerunt
ad nos undique adiuvantes.
et benedictionibus nos replentes.
Multi etiam divites
mortuos suos in honore apud
nos sepelierunt. Plurimi quoque
visionem hanc in fide cognoscentes.
magno desiderio ad nos
venerunt. sicut per prophetam
dictum est. Venient ad te
qui detrahebant tibi. Tunc spiritus
meus revixit. et que pri

be done. Therefore, with the permission of the Archbishop, we came in the fear of God to this place, together with a great company of our kindred and others. Then the Old Deceiver assailed me with great derision, in that many said: 'What is this, that so many mysteries should be revealed to this stupid and uneducated woman, when there are so many strong and wise men available? Nothing will come of this!' And many wondered about the revelation and whether it was from God or from the aridity of aerial spirits that lead many astray. And so I stayed in this place with twenty noble maidens, the daughters of wealthy parents, and we found no habitation or people there except for an old man, his wife and children. And such a great visitation of trials and pressure of work fell on me, like a storm cloud blotting out the sun, that with many tears and sighs I said 'O, O, God does not bring low those who trust in him'. And again, God granted me his grace, as the sun breaks through when clouds lift, and as a mother gives her crying baby milk and he rejoices after weeping. Then I saw in a true vision that these tribulations came to me in the same way as those of Moses when he led the children of Israel across the Red Sea into the desert. They murmured against God and reproached him strongly, even though God enlightened them with marvellous signs. So too, God allowed me in some measure to be vexed by the common folk, my relatives and some of those who were staying with me since they lacked the necessities, unless sufficient were given us in alms, by the grace of God. Just as the children of Israel disparaged Moses, so they said, shaking their heads over me, 'What is the point of this, that noble and wealthy nuns should move from a place where they lacked for nothing to such great poverty?' But we were awaiting the grace of God who had showed us this place, to come to our aid. After the burden of these troubles God rained his grace upon us. For many who had condemned us and called (the vision) useless and barren came on all sides to assist us, showering us with blessings. Many rich people buried their dead here, with honour. And many, recognising this vision with faith, came to us with great eagerness, just as it is said by the prophet, 'They that despised thee shall come to thee.'

in dolore [illegible] nunc quia deus in obliuionem me non duxisset p(re) gaudio fleui cum locum istum extollendo et multis utilibus rebus et edificiis multiplicando confirmauit. Sed tamen deus noluit quod in plena securitate constanter perseuerarem. sicut ab infancia mea in omnibus causis meis fecerat. cum nullam securitatem gaudij uite huius michi dimisit. per quod mens mea eleuari posset.

Nam cum librum sciuias scriberem. quandam nobilem puellam supradicte marchionisse filiam. in plena karitate habebam. sicut paulus thimotheum. que in diligenti amicicia in omnibus his se michi coniunxerat. et in passionibus meis michi condoluit. donec ipsum librum compleui. Sed post hec propter elegantiam generis sui ad dignitatem maioris nominis se inclinauit. ut mater cuiusdam sublimis ecclesie nominaretur. quod tamen non secundum deum. sed secundum honorem seculi huius quesiuit. Hec in alia quadam regione a nobis remota postquam a me recessit. uitam presentem cum nomine dignitatis cito perdidit. Alie etiam quedam nobiles puelle similiter fecerunt. se a me separantes. ex quibus quedam postea tam negligenter uiuebant. quod multi dixerunt. quia opera eorum ostenderent. quod in spiritum sanctum et in hominem qui de spiritu sancto loquebatur peccassent. Ego autem et diligentes me admirabamur. cur tanta persecutio super me ueniret. et deus consolationem michi non adhiberet. cum in peccatis perseuerare non uellem. sed bona opera deo adiuuante perficere desiderarem. In his librum sciuias compleui. sicut deus uoluit.

Quod ipsa cum loco suo quem sibi dominus elegit debbore quondam prophetisse et loco suo comparata sit. vi.

Ex precedenti uisionis descriptione. et beate uirginis liquet afflictione. quod locum quem sibi premonstrauit. et pro quo tardantem cecitate castigauit. ipse dominus elegit et preelegit in hereditatem sibi. ut nomen suum sanctum impensius glorificaretur ibi. tum propter sancti Roberti merita et secum ibi in xpo quiescencium. tum propter profectum sancte uirginis et secum illuc ueniencium. Inter hec subit mentem ueteris hystorie recordatio. et pulchra se nobis offert de debbora prophetissa. et loco in quo sedit. ad nostram prophetissam et locum suum comparatio. Sicut enim origenes dicit prestat non minimam consolationem mulierum sexui et p(ro)

Then my spirit revived, and whereas before I had wept for sorrow, now since God had not forgotten me, I wept for joy. And he honoured this place and strengthened it by many careful improvements and the addition of buildings. But God did not wish me to remain always secure, just as from my infancy in all my vicissitudes he gave no certainty in the joy of this life to me, by which my mind could be exalted. For while I was writing the book Scivias I held a certain noble girl, the daughter of the marchioness mentioned earlier, in great love, just as Paul loved Timothy. She allied herself to me in diligent friendship in everything and consoled me in all my trials until I completed the book. But after this, because of her noble connections, she turned aside to the honour of a higher position and was elected head of an important foundation. She sought this not according to the will of God, but for worldly honour. Soon afterwards she left me, and in another place, far from me, she gave up the present life and the dignity of her appointment. And certain other noble girls acted in the same way, cutting themselves off from me. Some of them afterwards led such an unregulated life that many said that they showed by their actions that they were sinning against the Holy Spirit and the one who spoke from out of it. I wondered, as did those who loved me, why such great trials fell to my lot and why God did not grant me consolation, since I did not seek to sin, but to accomplish good works, with God's help. In the midst of this I completed the book Scivias, as God wished."

VI. That she herself, and her dwelling place which God chose for her can be compared to the prophetess Deborah of old, and her place.

It is clear from the preceding description of the vision and the affliction of the blessed nun, that God himself chose the place which he showed her and on account of which he chastised her with blindness when she delayed. God bequeathed it to her as an inheritance so that his holy name might be glorified more greatly there, as much for the merits of St Rupert and those resting there with him in Christ, as for the reputation of the holy nun and those coming there with her. At this point an old story comes to mind which offers a pleasing comparison between the prophetess Deborah and her dwelling place, and our prophetess and hers. For Origen says, "It is no small comfort to

uocat eas ne pro infirmitate sexus
desperent etiam prophetie gratie ca
paces se fieri posse. sed intelligant
et credant quod meretur hanc gra
ciam puritas mentis. non diuersi
tas sexus. Debbora quippe que apes
interpretatur. in prophetie forma
uersatur. Certum namque est quod
omnis prophecia suauis celestis doc
trine fauos et dulcia diuini eloquij
mella componat. ut dauid dicit.
Quam dulcia faucibus meis eloquia
tua super mel ori meo. Hec inter ra
ma et bethel sedere dicitur. et rama
excelsa. et bethel domus dei interpre
tatur. Nichil enim humile nichil
deiectum erga prophetie sedem rep
peritur. sicut et apud salomonem
sedes sapiencie. uel in portis ciuita
tum consistit. uel in murorum me
nibus habitat. uel in turribus libe
re agit. Hoc modo prophecia in bea
ta hildegarde inter domum dei et ex
celsa dicitur habitasse. quod licet ui
deri etiam in promptu sit. localiter
potest tamen accipi et spiritualiter.
Docet enim te o sancta anima que
cumque ibi habitas. que super terram
sunt respuere. et que in celorum
excelsis sunt. ubi xpc in dextera
dei sedet querere. Illuc te prophe
cia eius hortatur ascendere. illuc
auditores suos molitur imponere.
Benedicta igitur gloria domini de
loco suo. de cuius emancipatione
quam spiritu preuidit beata uir
go dicit ita in scripto suo.

De tercia uisione et loci sui eman
cipatione. et quod eam deus libera
uit de instanti tribulatione. VII.

Tercia uisio.

Uidi in uisione et docta et coacta
sum. ut prelatis meis reue
larem. quod locus noster cum suis
pertinencijs. a loco in quo deo obla
ta fueram absoluendus esset. preter
quod subiectionem et obedientiam
deo ibi seruientibus deberemus.
quamdiu bonam fidem illorum
erga nos inueniremus. Hec ab
bati meo intimaui. sed infirmita
te correptus nichil inde disposu
it. quin etiam post paucos dies
uitam finiuit. Ad abbatem uero
succedentem. et moguntinum ar
chiepiscopum. et maiores ecclesie.
cum hec peruenissent. in fide et
caritate ea susceperunt. atque ita
fieri cum sigillo scripture firma
uerunt. Inter hec a quibusdam
multas infestationes pertuli. si
cut iosue quem pre alijs uictorem
inimici conabantur ducere in
confusionem. sed sicut deus ip
sum adiuuit. ita me et filias me
as liberauit. Sed et sicut ioseph
fratres sui inuidebant. quod a
patre plus alijs amaretur. ac
ipsum uendentes tunicam eius
scissam patri retulerunt. dicen
tes quod fera illum deuorauerit.
ita et quidam maliuoli tunicam

the female sex and it encourages them not to despair because of the weakness of their sex that they are capable of the gift of prophecy. But they must believe and understand that purity of mind merits the gift, not the distinction of sex." And Deborah, whose name means 'bee', was versed in prophetic forms. And it is a fact that every prophet combines the sweet comb of heavenly doctrine with the pleasant honey of divine eloquence. As David says, "How sweet to my palate is your eloquence, sweeter than honey to my mouth". She is said to live between Rama and Bethel, for 'Rama' means 'the heights', and 'Bethel', 'the house of God', for nothing humble or low is found as the seat of prophecy. So also in Solomon, the seat of Wisdom was either in the gates of the city, or dwelt in the ramparts of the walls or moved freely in high places. In this way, prophecy is said to have dwelt in the blessed Hildegard between the heights and the house of God. Although this can be readily understood in a physical sense, it can also be understood in its spiritual significance. For it teaches you, O holy soul, wherever you dwell, to despise the things which are of the earth and to seek what is in the heights of heaven, where Christ sits on the right hand of God. Her prophecy urges you to ascend there, where she strives to impell her listeners. So praised be the glory of the Lord and his place, whose liberation the blessed nun foresaw in a vision. She writes of it as follows:

VII. Concerning the third vision and the liberation of her place and how God freed her from pressing tribulation.

"I saw in a vision and was instructed and compelled to reveal to my superiors that our place and what belonged to it should be severed from the place where I had been dedicated to God, saving only that we should owe subjection and obedience to those serving God there as long as they kept good faith towards us. I told this to my abbot, but he was ill and could do nothing since he died within a few days. Now when these proposals reached the next abbot and the Archbishop of Mainz and senior churchmen, they accepted them in faith and charity and supported what was proposed by sealing the document. Meanwhile, I suffered much harrassment from certain people, like Joshua, whose enemies tried to lead him into confusion more than the others. But just as God helped him, so he liberated me and my daughters. And as his brothers envied Joseph, because he was loved more than the rest, they sold him and returned his torn garment to the father, saying a wild beast had eaten

gracie et laudis dei in nobis scinde
re uolebant. sed deus nobis suc
currit sicut et ioseph in honorem
restituit. Quamvis autem mul
tam [illegible]tatem haberemus. tamen
per graciam dei augmentabamur
sicut filii israhel qui quanto
plus opprimebantur tanto ma
gis crescebant. In gaudio itaque
[illegible] mei ad deum aspiciebamus.
[illegible] in tribulationibus michi
assistebat secura esse uolebam.

Quod eam deus sepe conforta
bat. quando eam uel diabolus
uel homo uexabat.

Sic opportune considerare pos
sumus. quod beata uirgo li
cet corporee infirmitatis afflicti
one. diabolice quoque et humane
insectationis pregrauaretur uexa
tione. semper tamen diuina
roborari et confirmari meruit
consolatione. Siquidem spiritus
sanctus graciam suam multis pro
futuram in electo uase suo uo
lens conseruare. omnis feculen
cie rubiginem lima correctionis
in ea studuit elimare. ut ex
castigatione proficiens uolun
tatem domini diligenter inuesti
garet. et iuxta apostolum ra
cionabile obsequium deo reddens.
totum uite sue cursum ad eius
sentenciam ordinaret. Et merito.
Gratuito enim suo dono nature
et gracie simul illustrans eam
bono preparabat et graciam in ha
bundancia magna et gloriam. graci
am in terris. gloriam in celis. graciam
sublimium meritorum. gloriam in
effabilium premiorum. Inde est
quod acerrimis castigabatur sicut
scriptum est. Flagellat deus omnem
filium quem recipit. ut in ea meri
torum augerentur merita. sicut
et in subsequenti uisione declara
tur quam describit ita.

De quarta uisione in qua bonos
et malos angelos uidit. viii.

Quarta uisio.

In lectum egritudinis quodam tem
pore me deus strauit et aereis pe
nis totum corpus meum infudit.
ita quod uene cum sanguine. caro
cum liuore. medulle cum ossibus.
in me aruerunt. uelut anima
mea a corpore eximi deberet. In
isto strepitu triginta dies fui. ita
quod ex calore aerii ignis uenter
meus feruebat. Unde quidam
hanc egritudinem pro pena com
putabant. Virtus quoque spiritus
mei carni mee infixa defecit. nec
ex hac uita translata. nec plene
fui in ea. Corpus etiam meum in
mutatum sternebatur in terram
super cilicium. nec tamen uidi fi
nem meum. cum et prelati mei.
filie. et proximi. cum planctu
magno uenirent. ut meum obi
tum uiderent. Sed ego in uera
uisione aciem magnam angelorum

him. So some ill-wishers sought to rend the garment of grace and praise of God in us. But God helped us, even as he restored Joseph to honour. Although we were under great pressure, we were increased by the grace of God just like the children of Israel, who, the more they were oppressed, the more they flourished. In the joy of my heart I looked to God, and because he stood by me in my trials I trusted in my preservation.

VIII. That God often strengthened her when she was molested either by the devil or by men.

Here we may conveniently see how the blessed nun, though heavily burdened by the wasting of bodily illness and the vexation of diabolical and human molestations, ever merited the strengthening and encouragement of divine consolation. Indeed, the Holy Spirit, desiring to preserve this gift in his chosen vessel, for the benefit of many, took care to remove all corrosive deposits with the file of correction. Thus, profiting from chastisement, she might diligently seek the Lord's will, and like the Apostle, reasonably giving obedience to God, she might order the whole course of her life to this end,and rightly so. For while freely illuminating her with the good gifts of nature and grace, he prepared for her grace and glory in abundance: grace on earth and glory in heaven - the grace of sublime merits, the glory of ineffable rewards. So it was that she was chastised on earth, since it is written "God scourgeth every son whom he receiveth", so that her deserts would be increased. This was made clear in a subsequent vision which she recounts as follows.

IX. Concerning the fourth vision in which she saw the good and bad angels.

At a certain time God prostrated me on a bed of sickness and suffused my whole body with fiery pains so that my blood and veins, bones and marrow, and the moisture of my flesh dried up inside me, as if my soul should have been taken from my body. I suffered this distress for thirty days while my belly burnt with the heat of aerial fire. Thus some thought that this illness was a punishment. And the strength of my spirit, combined with my flesh, waned, and I was neither out of this life, nor fully in it. My body was laid out, in its turn, on a cloth on the floor, but I did not see my end, although my superiors, daughters and relatives came to witness my death with great

humano intellectui innumerabile.
per hos dies interdum uidi. qui de
exercitu illo erant. qui cum michael
contra draconem pugnabant. et
hii sustinebant. quid de me deus
fieri iuberet. Sed unus fortis ex
eis clamabat ad me dicens. Eia.
aquila. quare dormis in sciencia.
Surge de dubitatione. Cognosceris.
O gemma in splendore. omnes aqui
le uidebunt te. sed mundus luge
bit. uita autem eterna gaudebit.
et ideo aurora ad solem surge. Sur
ge. surge. comede. et bibe. Mox aci
es tota. clamabat uoce sonora. Vox
gaudii. Nuncii siluerunt. non dum
uenit tempus transeundi. puella
ergo surge. Statim corpus meum
et sensus mei ad presentem uitam
mutabantur. Quod filie mee que
prius fleuerant cernentes. de terra
me leuatam in lectum reposuerunt.
et sic pristinas uires recepi. Pena
lis autem infirmitas a me pleniter
non recessit. sed tantum spiritus
meus de die in diem plus quam
prius in me confortabatur. Nam
pessimi aerei spiritus quibus pe
nales cruciatus hominum iniunc
ti sunt. penam hanc que michi ab
eis ut deus permisit inferebatur
subministrabant. sicut et tortores
fecerunt. qui beato laurencio et
aliis martyribus prunas appo
nebant. qui et ad me festinantes
uoce magna clamabant. Seduca

mus istam ut de deo dubitet. et
blasphemet. cur eam tantis penis
implicet. Sicut enim in iob per
missione dei factum est. quod sa
than corpus eius ita percussit. quod
uermibus scateret. ita aerius ig
nis subintrans carnem meam
consumpsit. quod et iheremie
accidit. qui dolorem suum flebi
liter planxit. sed diabolus ei per
suadere non potuit. quod deum
blasphemaret. Ego uero mollis
in carne. timida in mente. de
penis istis plurimum terrebar.
sed deus me confortauit. quod
eas pacienter ferebam. atque in
spiritu meo dixi. O. o. domine
deus omnia per que me tangis.
bona esse scio. quoniam cuncta
opera tua bona et sancta sunt.
quoniam hec ab infancia mea
promerui. sed tamen confido
quod animam meam in uita
futura. sic cruciari non permittas.

Quod languens per triennium
cherubin prauos a se propellen
tem angelos igneo gladio aspexit.

Cumque in his doloribus ad
huc laborarem. in uera uisi
one ammonita sum. ut ad locum
in quo oblata deo eram irem. et
uerba que deus michi ostende
rat. proferrem. quod et feci. ac
in eodem dolore ad filias meas
redii. Ad alia quoque loca congre
gationum iter arripui. ac ibi

lamentation. But I saw in a true vision a great troop of angels, innumerable to the mind of man, who were of that force who waged war with Michael against the dragon. They upheld what God had commanded to be done in my case. But a strong one from among them called to me, saying, 'O, O eagle, why are you sleeping in your knowledge? Arise from your doubt. You will have honour, O shining jewel. All the eagles will see you. The world will weep, but the life eternal will rejoice. O dawn, mount up towards the sun. Arise, arise, eat and drink.' Soon the whole troop called out with a loud voice, 'Joyful tidings, the messengers are silent. The time for departure has not yet come. Therefore, arise, maiden.' Immediately, my body and senses returned to the present life. Seeing this, my daughters stopped their weeping and lifting me from the ground, returned me to my bed. Thus I received back my former strength and, although the punishing illness did not fully leave me, my spirit was strengthened in me, each day more than the last. Now the wicked aerial spirits, by whom excruciating pain is inflicted on men, produced this pain which they visited upon me. God allowed it as he did the torturers who heaped coals on the blessed Laurence and other martyrs. Hastening towards me, they called out in a loud voice:'Let us lead her astray so that she doubts God and asks blasphemously why she should suffer so much pain.' For just as it happened in the case of Job that God allowed Satan to blast his body so that it swarmed with worms, so also the burning fire entered my body and consumed my flesh. And the same happened to Jeremiah who tearfully bewailed his tribulation. Yet the devil could not persuade him to blaspheme against God. But I, delicate in body and meek in spirit, was greatly terrified by these punishments. But God strengthened me since I bore these things patiently, and I said in my spirit, 'O, O Lord God, all the things with which you touch me I know are good, since all your works are good and holy and I have deserved them from my infancy. But I believe that in the future life you will not allow my soul to be so tortured.'"

X. That lying ill for three years she saw a cherub driving the wicked angels away with a fiery sword.

"And while I was afflicted with these pains I was advised in a true vision to go to the place where I was offered to God and to deliver the words which God had made known to me. I did this and returned to my daughters in the same distress. I also made brief trips to other religious houses and there made clear the words that God commanded

que deus iussit ibi explanaui.
In his omnibus uias corporis
mei quasi in elybano coctum
est. sicut et deus multos proba
uit quos uerba sua proferre
iussit. unde laus sibi sit. Q(uia)
et magnum auxilium in dua
bus filiabus meis et aliis mi
chi prebuit. quod passionib(us)
meis infatigabiliter condole
bant. unde et suspirans deo
gracias egi. quod homines te
dium mei non habebant. Si
enim tantam pressuram do
lorum que a deo non essent.
in carne mea habuissem. tam
diu uiuere non potuissem.
Quamuis tamen in his cru
ciarer. in superna tamen uisio
ne dictaui. cantaui. ac scripsi.
que spiritus sanctus per me
proferre uolebat. In his autem
languoribus triennio finito.
uidi quod cherubin in flagran
te igne in quo speculum mys
teriorum dei est. aerios spiritus
qui me torquebant. quasi ig
neo gladio insequebatur. ita
quod a me fugierunt clamantes.
tes. Ach. ach. ue. ue. Num ista
sic abibit. quod eam non rapie
mus. Mox spiritus meus in
me pleniter reuixit. corpus q(ue)
meum in uenis et medullis.
recreatum est. sicque tota qualis

Quod languore et demonum
terrore non solum non est su
perata. sed et defensione ange
lica est glorificata.

Ecce qualiter beata uirgo du
plici modo. nunc languorum
doloribus cruciata. nunc demo
num terroribus uexata. non solum
non superabatur. uerum etiam
multiplici uictoria sub defensio
ne angelica glorificabatur. Deni
que de una parte qua laborabat
infirmitate. femina mire inno
cencie. muniuit se uirtute paci
encie. et quasi eius molestie ser
mo diuinus blandiretur. Suffi
cit inquiens tibi gracia mea. nam
uirtus in infirmitate perficietur.
libenter gloriabatur in infirmi
tatibus. ut inhabitaret in se uir
tus xpi. et eo presumebat se di
ligi. quo uerberabatur argui. At
ex altera parte qua demonum ir
ritabatur arte. bellatrix egregia.
item se doctrine apostolice arma
uit custodia. Qua. Gladium in
quit salutis assumite. gladium
spiritus. quod est uerbum dei.
Et iterum. Induite uos arma
tura dei. ut possitis stare aduer
sus insidias diaboli. quia non
est nobis colluctatio aduersus
carnem et sanguinem. sed aduer
sus principatus et potestates te
nebrarum harum. Hec itaque mag

All this time the vessel of my body was baked as if in a furnace, just as God tries many whom he orders to deliver his words. He offered me help through two of my girls and others who tirelessly supported me in my trials. And with sighs, I gave thanks to God that I was not a burden to men. Now if I had suffered so grave a bodily illness and it was not sent from God, I would not have been able to survive so long. But although I was tortured in this way, I still dictated, sang and wrote in my heavenly vision, what the Holy Spirit wished to reveal through me. When the third year of this illness was completed, I saw a cherub in blazing fire, which mirrors the mystery of God, pursuing the aerial spirits which were tormenting me, as if with a fiery sword. And they fled from me crying 'Ach, ach, ve, ve, surely she will not depart since we will not carry her off?' Immediately my spirit revived in me and my body was renewed in its veins and marrows, and I made a complete recovery."

XI.That she was not only unvanquished by illness and the terror of demons but she was glorified by angelic protection.

See how the blessed nun, doubly tormented by the pains of illness and beset by the terrors of demons was not only unvanquished but was glorified with angelic protection by numerous victories. In short, on the one hand, this woman of admirable innocence protected herself with the virtue of patience, assuaging her ills with the divine word, as if saying "My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness." She eagerly welcomed illness so that the strength of Christ might dwell in her, and she presumed she was loved to the extent that she deserved to be censured. On the other hand, when she was vexed by demonic arts the excellent warrior armed herself with the defence of apostolic doctrine. How? "Take", he says, " the helmet of salvation and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God" and again: "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers of the darkness of this world."

na bellandi arte. et his armis pro
pugnatrix inuicta decertabat. et
ad huc carne inclusa. et in terris
posita. contra spiritualia nequicie
in celestibus dimicabat. Quapropter
et ipsi principes tenebrarum hor
ruerunt. quando tanta arte in
structam. et omni armatura forti
um uallatam feminam contra se
procedere uiderunt. Horruerunt
inquam. et ue suum conclamantes.
cum confusione fugierunt. quoni
am timor et tremor super eos ue
nerunt. cum uiderent cherubin
terribilem ut castrorum aciem or
dinatam. famulam quidem dei
protegentem. se autem flammea
framea ne eam uexarent perse
quentem. Itaque admirati sunt.
conturbati sunt. commoti sunt.
tremor apprehendit eos. ita ut
dicerent. Castra dei sunt hec. fugi
amus israhelem. Et statim fugie
runt. Ita inter superos et inferos
spiritus adletha dei luctabatur.
propulsatis que aduersariis. leta
semper. uictoria gloriabatur.

Nec illud silendum est. quod cum
quadam uice febribus labo
raret. quosdam sanctos uidit qui
dicebant. Vindica domine san
guinem sanctorum tuorum. Et
alii ad ipsam. dolorem inquiunt
quem pateris. bona uoluntate
sufferre debes. Et ecce alii scil
inter se conferebant. Nobiscum
ibit an non. Et alii respondebant.
Preterita. presencia. et futura.
non dum permittunt eam. Sed
tamen cum opus suum perfecerit.
nobiscum eam tollemus. Tunc
simul omnes clamabant. O fe
lix anima et certissima. surge.
surge. sicut aquila. quia sol te
produxit et nescisti. Et ilico
conualuit.

Quod philosophus conuer
sus deum in ea laudauit. et
quod suas puellas a demoniis
uanitatibus castigauit. XII.

Nec solum cum molestiam lan
guorum. uel seuiciam demo
num. sed etiam cum insectatio
nes incurrit hominum. affuit
ei dominus. et corda aduersari
orum conuertit in melius. si
cut ipsa describit de conuersio
ne philosophi primo sibi immo
deo contrarii. in quo uere post
ea facta est mutatio dextere ex
celsi. et cum uanitates que per
deceptionem sathane oriebantur.
in cordibus puellarum suarum
remouit exhortacionibus sanctarum
scripturarum. De quibus ita di
cit. Quidam philosophus de diuiciis
honoratus. cum de his que ui
deram diu dubitasset. tandem
ad nos uenit. et locum nostrum

With this great skill in combat and with such weapons, the unvanquished warrior battled it out. And still imprisoned in the flesh and earthbound, she fought in the heavens against the powers of wickedness. At this, the powers of darkness trembled, as they saw this woman, learned in such arts and protected by all the armour of the brave, advancing against them. They quaked, I say, and crying "Woe is us", fled in confusion, as fear and trembling came upon them, when they saw the terrible cherub, drawn up like a castle defence to protect the servant of God, flinging a fiery lance, so that they would not molest her. So they were amazed, terrified, disturbed. Dread seized them and they said, "Let us flee from the face of Israel for the Lord fighteth for them". And immediately they fled. So the champion of God contended among the higher and lower spirits and repelling her enemies was always rewarded with sweet victory. Nor should I neglect to say that at a time when she was ill with fever she saw certain saints who said, "Avenge O Lord the blood of your saints". And others said to her, "You should endure the pain you suffer with good will". And behold, other saints spoke thus among themselves, "Will she go with us or not?", and others replied, "The past, present and future will not yet allow her, but when her work is finished we will raise her to us." Then they all cried out together, "O happy and most steadfast soul, mount up, mount up like an eagle as the sun has led you forth and you knew it not." At that she got well.

XII. That a converted philosopher praised God in her, and that she set to rights her girls who were deceived by demons.

God was with her not only when she incurred the vexations of illness or the raging of demons but also the insults of men and she changed the hearts of her opponents for the better. She describes the conversion of a philosopher, opposed first to her, but ultimately to God - indeed he was eventually changed to the right hand of the Almighty. When, through the deception of Satan, vanities arose in the hearts of her nuns, she removed them with exhortations from the holy scriptures. This is what she said on these subjects: "A certain wealthy and distinguished philosopher, although he had been sceptical of the things I had seen for a long time, at last came to us and greatly endowed our place with buildings, lands, and other things we needed.

edificiis. allodiis. et aliis necessa-
riis ualde ornauit. unde anima
mea exhilarata fuit. quia deus
in obliuionem nos non adduxit.
Acri enim scrutatione. sed sapi-
enti exquisiuit. que essent uel un-
de uisionis huius scripta. donec
diuina inspiratione pleniter
credidit. et qui prius maliciosis
uerbis nos spreuerat. cum deus
iniusticiam in corde eius suffocas-
set. maioribus benedictionibus
ad nos conuersus fuit. sicut et
pharaonem deus in mari rubro
submersit. qui filios israhel ca-
pere uoluit. De huius immuta-
tione multi admirati magis cre-
diderunt. et per ipsum sapien-
tem deus benedictionem suam
super nos fudit. sicut unguentū
quod descendit in barbam bar-
bam aaron. unde et omnes eū
patrem nominauimus. Hic eti-
am qui tantus princeps in no-
mine suo fuit. peciit ut apud
nos sepeliretur. et ita factum
est. Tunc mens mea solidata
est. et curam egi filiarum me-
arum in necessariis tam corporum
quam animarum. sicut a ma-
gistris michi erat statutum.
Ad ueram uero uisionem aspi-
ciebam magna sollicitudine.
quomodo aerii spiritus contra
nos pugnarent. uidique quod idē

spiritus quasdam nobiles filias me-
as per diuersas uanitates quasi in
rete perplexerant. At ego per osten-
sionem dei eis hoc innotui. ipsasque
uerbis sanctarum scripturarum
et regulari disciplina. bonaque con-
uersatione. circumfodi et muniui.
Sed quedam ex eis toruis lumini-
bus me aspicientes. uerbis occulte
me laniabant. dicentes. quod im-
portabilem strepitum regularis
discipline quo eas constringere
uellem. sufferre non possent. Sed
deus in aliis bonis sapientibusque
sororibus que in omnibus passionibus
meis michi astiterant. solacium ad-
hibuit. sicut in susanna factum est.
quam deus per danielem a falsis
testimoniis liberauit. Quamuis
autem huiusmodi tribulationibus
frequenter fatigarer. tamen librū
uite meritorum. diuinitus michi
reuelatum. per graciam dei ad fi-
nem perduxi.

Quod nec prosperis eleuabatur.
nec aduersis deprimebatur. VIII.

Sic inter aduersa et prospera se
agebat uirgo deo deuota. ut
nec in prosperis eleuaretur. nec
in aduersis deprimeretur. sed in
utroque unum eundemque seruans
uigorem. nec uituperio concutie-
batur. nec laude seducebatur.
Intentum enim tanquam arcū
animum ad omnem disciplinā

habebat
toritate:
ra se. su
in ea con
ex eius
nis prof
uero in
sicut de
flictu a
torum
quod pe
De qui
carnis
et sanct
exempl
N uera
homini
naturis
tamen
mo ex
de ciner
git et
fundat
est. et
omnis
opus h
operi
est. Sicu
fabri
ro an
picit.
amplex
quia q
ne. in
simili

Then my spirit rejoiced for God did not consign us to oblivion. Keenly but wisely, he scrutinised the nature and source of the visionary writings until he was fully convinced by their divine inspiration. He who before scorned us with perfidious words was won over to us with greater blessings, when God quenched the injustice in his heart. So too, God drowned Pharoah in the Red Sea when he wished to capture the children of Israel. Many were amazed at this change and their faith was increased. Through this wise man God poured his blessing on us, 'like ointment which ran down the beard, even Aaron's beard'. From that time forth we all called him 'Father', and he who rejoiced in such a noble name asked to be buried with us, and this was done. Then my mind was strengthened and I took care of my daughters' needs, both bodily and spiritual, as I had been ordered by my superiors. In a true vision I saw with great concern how the aerial spirits had entangled some of my noble daughters with various deceptions, as if in a net. I observed these things in them, through God's showing and I defended and supported them with words of holy scripture, the discipline of the Rule and a proper monastic life.But some of them, looking at me gloomily, rent me with words in private, saying that they could not bear the insufferable sound of the discipline of the Rule with which I wished to bind them. But God gave me comfort in other good and wise sisters who stood by me in all my troubles, just like Susannah, when God freed her from the false witnesses through Daniel. And although often worn out by such tribulations I brought the book Vitae Meritorum, which was divinely revealed to me, to a close, by the grace of God."

XIII. That she was neither puffed up by prosperity nor cast down by adversity.

Thus in adversity and prosperity, the nun devoted to God conducted herself so that she was neither puffed up by the one nor cast down by the other, but preserving one and the same strength in both, she was neither agitated by abuse nor diverted by praise. Her mind was like a bow braced towards all discipline and without relaxing her authority

habebat. quo non languescente auc
toritate: modo mansueta. modo seue
ra. se. suos q; regebat. Erat quippe
in ea comitate condita grauitas. et
ex eius lingua melle dulcior. oratio
nis profluebat suauitas. Habebat
uero in omnibus sanam doctrinā.
sicut de natura hominis. de con
flictu carnis et spiritus. de sanc
torum patrum exemplis scribit.
quod percepit ꝑ reuelationē diuinā.

De quinta uisione ubi agit de
carnis et spiritus colluctatione
et sanctorum patrum laudabili
exemplificatione.

In uera inquit uisione uidi figurā
hominis. qui quamuis in duabus
naturis sit anime et corporis. unū
tamen edificium est. uelut cum ho
mo ex lapidibus domum componit.
de cinerosa quoq; materia eam te
git. et confirmat. ne cadat. et con
fundatur. Homo enim opus dei
est. et cum omni creatura est. ac
omnis creatura cum ipso est. Sed
opus hominis quod sine uita est.
operi dei quod uita est simile nō
est. sicut uas figuli. edificationib;
fabri simile non est. Natura ue
ro anime ad infinitam uitam as
picit. corpus autem caducam uitā
amplectitur. nec unanimes sunt.
quia. quamuis simul sint in homi
ne. in duo tamen diuiduntur. Hāc
similitudinem cum deus spiritū
suum per prophetiam et sapienci
am uel ꝑ miracula in hominem mit
tit. carni illius sepe dolores infigit
quatinus spiritus sanctus ibi ha
bitare possit. Si autem eam dolo
ribus non constringit. tunc secula
ribus moribus facile admiscetur.
sicut in samsone. et salomone. aliis
q; accidit. qui in suspiriis spiritus
defecerunt. ad delectationem car
nis se inclinantes. quia ꝓphecia.
sapiencia. et miracula. in gaudio
iocunda sunt. Sed cum homo in
terdum delectationem carnis se
inclinantes per suggestionem dia
boli colit. sepe dicit. Ach in mundo
fetore fecis feteo. quod est quod spi
ritus carnem affligit. quia ipse spi
ritus gustum peccati. ex natura
sua odio habet. Cum autem caro
desideria anime frangit. propter
frequentem delectationem in quā
per fetorem peccati se inuoluit. ita
quod spiritus propter eandem mo
lestiam suspirare non potest. tunc
caro affligit spiritum. et afflictio
hec in duas partes per graciam dei
diuiditur. Conflictus iste qui dic
tus est de figura que homo est. in
abel incepit. quem frater suus
odio habuit. et in noe qui a filiis
suis iniuriam pertulit. et in abra
ham. qui de amicis suis obprobria
sustinuit. et in iacob. qui propter
fratrem suum profugus fuit. atq;

she ruled herself and her own with a combination of lenience and severity. Indeed her seriousness was concealed by her affability and from her tongue flowed delightful speech, sweeter than honey. She possessed sound doctrine on all subjects and wrote about the nature of man, the conflict between the soul and the body and the exempla of the holy fathers which she understood through divine revelation.

XIV. Concerning the fifth vision, where she deals with the struggle between the flesh and spirit and the exempla of the holy fathers.

"In a true vision", she said, "I saw the form of man, who although he has two natures - spiritual and corporeal - is, however, one structure, in the same way that when a man builds a house of stone, he cements and fixes it with ashy material to prevent its collapse. Now man is God's handiwork, and he is with every created thing and every creature is with him. But the work of man, being inanimate, is not like the work of God, which is living. So also the potter's vessel is unlike the mason's buildings. The nature of the soul is to look to eternal life, but the body embraces this fleeting existence. The two are not inseparable because although they are united in man they can be divided. It is like this when God sends his spirit into men through prophecy and wisdom, or by miracles, he often inflicts pain on that body so that the Holy Spirit can dwell there. If, however, he does not hedge it about with pains, then it can easily be entangled in the ways of the world. This happened in the case of Samson, Solomon, and others who weakened in the inspiration of the spirit and turned to fleshly delights. Prophecy, wisdom and miracles are delightful, but when a man cultivates the delights of the flesh, urged by the devil, he often says, 'Ach, I stink with a vile smell of dung!' This is because the spirit afflicts the flesh, since the spirit itself hates the taste of sin by its very nature. And when, because of the frequent pleasure in which it is involved through the filth of sin, the flesh destroys the longings of the soul so that the spirit cannot breathe for that wickedness, then the flesh afflicts the spirit and this affliction is divided into two parts by the grace of God. And this conflict which is described in human metaphors began in Abel who was hated by his brother, and in Noah who was wronged by his children, and in Abraham who was censured by his friends, and in Jacob, who was banished on account of his brother, and in Moses who was vexed by his friends when

in moÿse. qui ab amicis afflictus
est. quia inimicis consenserunt.
Hec afflictio inter discipulos quo
que christi erat. quia propter duriciam
infidelitatis. caro unius spiritum
suffocauit. ceteri autem cum spi
ritu in afflictione contra carnem
~~fuit~~ erant. Zacheus quoque ewan
gelicus. cum spiritu in afflictio
ne contra carnem fuit. Iuuenis
autem qui in ewangelio cum christo
loquebatur. contra carnem cum
spiritu in afflictione non erat.
unde et a filio dei fugit. Saulus
autem in credulitate sua spiritum
primitus contriuit. sed deus ma
lum hoc in ipso dissipauit. sicut
de celo sathanam in abyssum pro
iecit. et de saulo paulum fecit.
Abel enim qui in affluenti deside
rio anime immolauit sanctifica
tus est. cain autem repudiatus.
quia caro spiritum eius per odi
um suffocauit. Noe etiam iusti
ficatus. quia deo sacrificauit. sed
filius eius spurcicie carnis patrem
decipiendo respondit. et ideo liber
tate caruit. nomine filii indignus
seruus est dictus. Abraham quoque
multiplicatus est. quoniam deo o
bediens. carnem suam contra car
nis iura diligenter affligebat.
Hic in alienam gentem conuer
sus est. A filiis autem et amicis
ruit libertas eorum qui sibi re

sistebant euasiuit. a filiis quippe is
rahel eiecti sunt. qui liberi exstite
runt. Iacob quoque deo dilectus. quia
~~deo dilectus~~ in desiderio anime iustici
am semper bibit. in benedictionibus
dei perseuerauit. esau autem frater
eius benedictione spoliatus est. propter
ter odium quod ad ipsum habuit.
Moÿses quoque famulus et amicus
dei. quem in mÿsteriis et miraculis
habuit et seruauit. responsum car
nis in se oppressit. unde qui eum
odio habebant perierunt. nec in
terram promissionis peruenerunt.
Apostoli carnem suam opprimebant.
sed iudas in desiderio anime totus
cecus fuit. qui christum magis seque
batur ut a populo honorificaretur.
quam ut in eum crederet. sicut et
discipuli qui desiderium anime
pleniter non habebant. doctrinam
quidem christi libenter audierunt.
sed quoniam in spiritu tediosi erant.
cum perfectionem iusticie eius
sufferre non possent. ab eo recesse
runt. Zacheus in iocunditate car
nis afflictionem spiritus contra
carnem habuit. ita quod opera
sua sibi displicuerunt. unde cum
de filio dei audisset. quod iustus
esset. ilico ad eum cucurrit. et in
eum credidit. quia peccata sua
prius per spiritum planxit. Sed
iuuenis in ewangelio positus. di
uiciis oneratus. famam rerum

they were in collusion with his enemies. This conflict was present among Christ's disciples when the flesh of one of them overcame the spirit through callous faithlessness. Zacheus, in the Gospel, was involved in a struggle of spirit against flesh. The young man who spoke with Christ in the Gospel was not waging a war of spirit against flesh and he fled from the Son of God. At first Saul wore down his spirit in unbelief, but God routed this evil in him and just as he hurled Satan into the abyss, so he made Paul from Saul. Abel who made sacrifice in the desire that welled from his heart was sanctified. But Cain was rejected since his flesh killed his spirit with hatred. Noah was justified because he sacrificed to God, but his son replied by taking his father unawares in the impurity of his flesh and so, losing his liberty, he was called a servant, unworthy of the name of a son. Abraham's seed was multiplied since in obedience to God he diligently mortified his flesh against its promptings. He turned to an alien people and the liberty of his sons and the friends who resisted him was taken away. They were cast out by the children of Israel who remained free. Jacob, beloved of God, retained his blessing because he always drank in justice with an eager spirit. But his brother Esau was deprived of the blessing because of the hatred he bore towards him. Moses, the servant and friend of God, in mysteries and miracles subdued the promptings of the flesh in himself. And those who hated him perished and did not reach the promised land. The apostles fought against their flesh, but Judas was quite blind to the longings of the spirit. He followed Christ so that he might be honoured by the people, rather than because he believed in him. So also the followers who did not have entirely spiritual longings willingly listened to the teachings of Christ, but since they were slack spirited, fled away from him when they could not bear his perfect justice. Zachaeus, in the pleasure of his body, fought a battle of spirit with flesh, so that his works displeased him. So that when he heard that the Son of God was just, he immediately ran to him, and believed in him because he formerly bewailed his sins in the spirit. But the young man in the Gospel who was burdened with riches, willingly hearing his fame, came to the Son

libenter audiens ad dei filium uenit.
querens quid facturus esset. sed
cum perfectum responsum accepit.
in tristiciam corruit. et quia eius
spiritum suffocauit. a xpo recessit.
Saulus quoque importunus corde
indurato. contra fidem xpi cornu
a superbie erexit. sed deus illum
strauit. carnis uoluntatem in eo
mortificauit. et ad bonum eum
conuertit. Ego autem paupercula
forma hos precipue dilexi. et in
uocaui. qui carnem suam in spiri
tu afflixerunt. et ab his declinaui.
qui se contra spiritum indurauerunt.
et eum suffocauerunt. nec
unquam requieui. sed in tribulatio
nibus plurimis fatigata fui. donec
deus rorem gracie sue super me
pluit. sicut familiari suo dixit.
inimicus ero inimicis tuis. et af
fligentes te affligam. et precedet
te angelus meus. Et iterum. Fa
mulo meo ego prestiti honorem
magnum. et omnes inimicos eius
humiliaui. Sed et in plurimis
iniuriis deus ita me constrinxit.
quod cogitare non audebam quan
ta benignitas gracie eius erga
me foret. cum tamen magnas
contrarietates illis occurrere
uidebam. qui ueritati dei resiste
bant. Et de tribulationibus et
penis quas de aerio calore pas
sa sum. corpus meum ita coagul

catum est. sicut limosa terra cum
aqua conglutinatur.

De sexta uisione in qua [illegible] tres
et diuersa habitacula uidit. XV.

Magne profecto esset utilitatis
obscuritatem indagare. que tante subtilitatis. si non esset no
bis indictum pocius textum ui
sionum sancte uirginis scriptis
exarare. et hystoriam uite eius ali
quibus uerbis explanare. Exerce
ret enim sensum nostrum. ut fatiga
tione fieret dilatatus. et quod ca
pere non posset ociosus. caperet
exercitatus. Nunc uero quia ad
alia festinamus. uisiones eius
carptim intento calamo perscri
bamus. Ait enim.

Sexta uisio.

Tres turres in uisione aspici
ebam. per quas sapiencia
quedam occulta michi manifes
tauit. Prima tria habebat ha
bitacula. In primo nobiles puel
le cum cum quibusdam aliis e
rant. que in ardenti karitate
uerba dei ex ore meo audiebant.
atque in hoc quasi esuriem semper
habebant. Sed in secundo alie que
dam stabiles et sapientes fuerunt.
que in cordibus et uerbis suis
ueritatem dei amplectebantur
dicentes. O quamdiu ista nobis
cum perseuerabunt. Et ex
hoc fatigate non sunt. In tercio

of God,asking what he should do. But when he heard the counsel of perfection he became despondent, and as his flesh overwhelmed his spirit, he departed from Christ. Saul also importunately raised the horn of pride with a hard heart against the faith of Christ. But God struck him down, destroyed the will of the flesh in him and converted him to good. And I, poor weak woman that I am, have especially loved and appealed to those who strove against the flesh in the spirit, and have turned away from those who hardened themselves against the spirit and stifled it. And I have never had repose but have ever been wearied by my many trials, until God rained the dew of his grace on me, just as he said to his servant: 'Then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies and an adversary to thine adversaries. For my angel shall go before thee'. And again, 'I have given great honour to my servant and have brought low his enemies'. But God so bound me with numerous injuries because I dared not imagine what great kindness of his grace would come to me, when I saw major setbacks befalling those who resisted the grace of God. And from the troubles and pains that I suffered because of the fiery heat, my body was all kneaded together, like muddy soil, mixed with water."

XV. Concerning the sixth vision, in which she saw three towers with various rooms.

It would indeed be most useful to investigate the obscurity of these very subtle matters if we had not been commanded to set down the words of the visions of the holy nun in writing and to describe in other words the story of her life. For it sharpens our wits so that they are enlarged by use and what they cannot understand while idle they might with effort. Now let us hasten to other matters and write down her visions separately, with eager pen. For she said:

Sixth vision

"I saw three towers in a vision through which Wisdom showed me certain hidden things. The first had three rooms. In the first were noble maidens with certain others who listened with burning love to the words of God from my mouth, as if they could not have enough of them. In the second were certain wise and steadfast women who embraced the truth of God in their hearts and words, saying, 'O how long will these things remain with us?' And they never tired of it.

uero habitaculo fortes armati ex communi populo erant. qui uehemens ad nos iter facientes. in admirationem de predictis miraculis ducti sunt. magno q; desiderio ea amauerunt. et hoc sepe faciebant. sicut communis populus in firma et forti turri alicuius principis defensionem querit. ut ab inimicis muniatur. In secunda uero turri. tria habitacula erant. quorum duo arida in siccitate fuerunt. et eadem siccitas quasi densa nebula apparebat. Et in his duobus habitaculis fuerunt: in unum consencientes dixerunt. Que et unde sunt ista. que hec quasi de deo loquitur. Utrum est nobis aliter uiuere. quam qui nos precesserunt. aut qui ad huc uiuunt. Quapropt ad illos qui nos cognoscunt conuertemur. quia in aliis perseuerare non possumus. Sic q; ad prefatum communem populum se conuertebant. et nec in illa nec in prefata turri ullius utilitatis erant. Et in uera uisione audiui uocem ad ipsos dicentem. Omne regnum in se ipsum diuisum desolabitur. et domus supra domum cadet. In tercio autem eiusdem turris habitaculo communis populus fuit. qui multiplici amore uerba dei que de uera uisione proferebam dilexit. ac in tribulationibus michi astitit. quemadmodum et publicani xpo adheserunt. Sed et tercia turris tria propugnacula habebat. quorum primum ligneum fuit. secundum ex fulgentibus lapidibus ornatum. tercium de sepi factum. Aliud autem edificium in uisione michi occultatum est. ita quod uerba de eo nunc non didici. sed in uero lumine audiui. quod futura scriptura que de illo exarabitur. forcior et excellencior precedencium erit.

De septima uisione in qua dicit quomodo iohes euglista didicit. xvi.

Septima uisio.

Subsequenti demum tempore mysticam et mirificam uisionem uidi. ita quod omnia uiscera mea concussa sunt. et sensualitas corporis mei extincta est. quoniam sciencia mea in alium modum conuersa est quasi me nescirem. Et de dei inspiratione in scienciam anime mee: quasi gutte suauis pluuie spargebantur. quia et spiritus sanctus iohannem euangelistam imbuit. cum de pectore ihu profundissimam reuelationem suxit. ubi sensus ipsius sca diuinitate ita tactus est. quod absconsa mysteria et opera ape

ruit. In prin
bium. et cete
ante creatu
quod post ea
creaturas p
suum in ea
sicut faber
facit. quod
destinatione
liter appa
opus dei c
Sed et hom
tis. et obum
eius esse. a
trinitatem
deus ad ym
nem suam
fer in mal
pergere n
hominis d
bit. quam
temptauer
tum et ue
de initio
sio me do
fecit. Vi
tio iniciu
nec dum
beret. inc
creaturar
rende esse
Quod
xvii. fonte e

In the third room were strong armed men from the common people, who coming eagerly towards us were amazed by these miracles and loved them with great longing. And they did this often, just as the common people seek the protection of some lord in a stout, strong tower as a defence against their enemies. Now in the second tower there were three rooms, two of which were parched and dry and this dryness seemed like a dense cloud. And those who were in these two rooms said with one accord, 'What are these things that she says as if from God, and where do they come from? It is hard for us to live differently from those who went before us or who are yet living. Let us return to those who know us, since we cannot persevere in other things.' And so they changed over to the common people and were of no use in that tower or the other one. And in this true vision I heard a voice saying to them, 'Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a house divided against a house falleth'. Now in the third room of the tower were the common people, who delighted with manifold love in the words of God which I offered from my true vision, and stood by me in my trials as the publicans stuck to Christ. The third tower had three ramparts. The first of these was of wood, the second ornamented with shining stones and the third was a hedge. But the other building was hidden from me in this vision so I have said nothing about it now. But I heard in the true light that the future writing that will be composed about it will be greater and more excellent than what went before."

XVI. About the seventh vision in which she says how she learnt the Gospel of John.

"At last, at a later time I saw a mysterious and wonderful vision so that my innards were convulsed and I lost all bodily sensation, since my knowledge was altered to another mode, as if I did not know myself. And by the inspiration of God, drops, as it were, of sweet rain were sprinkled in my soul's understanding as the Holy Spirit filled John the Evangelist when he sucked the most profound revelations from the breast of Jesus. His spirit was touched by the Holy Godhead which revealed hidden mysteries and works, saying :

runt. In principio inquiens erat uerbum. et cetera. Nam uerbum quod ante creaturas sine inicio fuit. et quod post eas sine fine erit. omnes creaturas procedere iussit. et opus suum in ea similitudine produxit. sicut faber opus suum fulminare facit. quod quia ante euum in predestinatione sua fuit. modo uisibiliter apparuit. Unde et homo opus dei cum omni creatura est. Sed et homo operarius diuinitatis. et obumbratio mysteriorum eius esse. atque in omnibus sanctam trinitatem reuelare debet. quem deus ad ymaginem et similitudinem suam fecit. Sicut enim lucifer in malignitate sua deum dispergere non potuit. ita nec statum hominis destruere potuit. ualebit. quamuis in primo homine id temptauerit. Omnem itaque dictatum et uerba ewangelii huius quod de initio operis dei est. predicta uisio me docuit. et me explanare fecit. Uidi quoque quod eadem explanatio inicium alterius scripture que nec dum manifestata erat esse deberet. in qua multe scrutationes creaturarum diuini mysterii querende essent.

xvii Quod spiritus specialis gratie fonte eam potauit sapientie.

Ecce quantum scribentes progressi sumus. tantum nobis insignium uisionum. actuum et uerborum beate uirginis auctus est cumulus. In quibus summe gratie tanta exuberat doctrina et ueritas. ut eam summopere non amplecti. omni conamine non uenerari. ingens sit obstinate mentis temeritas. Quis enim nisi spiritus diuinus graciarum largitor opimus. tam profluo fonte sapiencie salutaris eam potauit. quod affluencia spiritualis doctrine quasi flumen aque uiue tam largiter de eius corde manauit. Penna siquidem interne contemplationis in ipsa abdita uolauit. superne uisionis ubi didicit. ewangelium iohannis. Et quis sapiens ambigat hanc sanctam sedem fuisse eterne sapiencie. cui reuelauit deus tantum thesaurum interne sciencie. Certe moralis discipline honestas que sibi familiaris fuit. ita naturales animi sui motus composuit. ut amore diuine speculationis rationabili progressu. ad superna proueheretur. ubi leto cordis iubilo. sponso suo Christo proclamare delectaretur. Trahe me post te. curremus in odore unguentorum tuorum. ubi

'In the beginning was the word, etc.' For the Word which was without beginning, before all creation and which will endure beyond them forever, ordered all creatures to come forth. He produced his work like the craftsman who makes his work shine forth and become visible though it was previously inchoate. Man, too, is God's handiwork, like every other creature. But man is also God's journeyman and the foreshadowing of the mysteries of God and he whom He made in his image and likeness should reveal the Holy Trinity in all things. For just as Lucifer in his wickedness was not able to rout God, so he is unable to destroy man's position, although he tried it with the first man. Thus the vision taught me and allowed me to explain all the words and teachings of the Evangelist which concern the beginning of God's works. And I saw that this explanation should form the beginning of another work which had not yet been revealed, in which many investigations of the divine mysteries of created things must be sought.

XVII. That the spirit of special grace caused her to drink from the fountain of wisdom.

See how far we have fared in our writing and what a collection of the words, deeds and visions of the blessed nun has been amassed by us. From these things such great teaching and truth pour forth that great would be the temerity of the obstinate mind that did not try with all its might to embrace or venerate it by any means. For who but the divine spirit, that best bestower of gifts, caused her to drink from so rich a fountain of saving wisdom, that a flood of spiritual teaching like a river of living water flowed so freely from her heart? She flew on the wings of internal contemplation hidden in herself, where she learnt the Gospel of John of the celestial vision. And what wise man will doubt that it was the holy seat of eternal wisdom from which God revealed such a great treasure of internal knowledge? Indeed, the probity of her moral teaching which was always with her so ordered the natural movements of her mind, that from a love of divine contemplation, she was conveyed by a rational progression to the heights. Here she could delight in exclaiming to her spouse with gay and heartfelt jubilation:

[illegible] habentes cytharas in manibus canerent canticum moysi serui dei et canticum agni. legis scilicet canticum et evangelii. Et nos igitur secundi libri termino hic fixo. etiam canticum laudis domino canamus. dum tam uastum pelagus uisionum sancte uirginis enauigamus. Interim autem respiremus. et ad miraculorum eius libellum describendum uela nauigii nostri spiritu sancto fauente reparemus.

Explicit liber secundus. Incipit prologus in librum tercium de miraculis sancte uirginis

Decursis iam duobus libris superioribus de beate hildegardis uirginis uita et uisionibus. subsequenter de miraculis eius et uirtutibus scribere ulterius michi quidem non est pigrum. uobis autem necessarium o Ludowice et Godefride abbates clarissimi. hunc tercium adgredior ordinare librum. non securitate efficientie. sed presumptione susceptum obedientie. Sed quare uobis necessarium? Utique quia ualida causa est amor sanctus. qui sicut eam in uita dilexistis. ita et in morte ab ea non separari pio affectu proposuistis. Hoc itaque sancto amore affectis fuit uobis necessarium. quod per me uestrum uicarium gesta eius ad noticiam peruenirent futurorum hominum. ut pro his glorificarent dominum qui in sanctis suis mirabilis. mirabiliter in ea operatus est. ut omnibus bonis esset imitabilis. Quicquid enim de ea dici potest. totum est iocundum et amabile. totum decorum. utile et honorabile. quia non solum omni morum sanctitate. uel mysteriorum dei interna contemplatione. uerum etiam spectabilis fuit et est miraculorum insignium operatione. quorum numerum excedens tanta habetur copia. quod eam uerbis uix possunt extollere etiam preclara ingenia. Sed tamen ad enarranda pauca de pluribus. si uobis orantibus dominus dignetur nobis in altum ductis spiritus sui auram prosperam dare. secundo uerbi cursu portum salutis speramus intrare. Vale.

Explicit prologus.

Incipit liber tercius de miracu

'Draw me after thee. We will run in the savour of thy ointments'. There, among those who have lyres in their hands she would sing the song of Moses, God's servant, and the song of the Lamb, that is, the song of the Law and the Evangelists. And here, having made an end to the second book we can sing songs of praise to the Lord for traversing the vast sea of the visions of the holy nun. And now let us refresh ourselves and with the favour of the Holy Spirit, prepare the sails of our craft for describing the book of her miracles.

End of the second book. Here begins the prologue of the third book concerning the miracles of the holy nun.

Now that the two earlier books of the life and visions of the blessed Hildegard have run their course I am not loath to write the third of the series about her miracles and virtues, as you required, O most excellent abbots, Ludwig and Godfrey. Therefore I undertake to compose the third book, not because I have confidence in my own skills but because you expect my obedience. But why did you need this? Undoubtedly, the true reason is sacred love. Just as you loved her in life, so you do not wish to be separated in loyal affection from her in death. So you ordered this, inspired by holy love, that her deeds would be vouchsafed to the notice of future generations through my agency. And for this they might glorify the Lord who in his saints wonderfully performed his miracles, as also in her, so that she might be a pattern for all good people. For whatever can be said about her is entirely delightful and pleasant, entirely becoming, beneficial and honourable. Not only for the holiness of all her ways and the internal contemplation of God's mysteries was she outstanding, but she is outstanding for her remarkable miracle working. Of these miracles there was such an exceedingly large number that the finest minds could scarcely describe it in words. But in setting down a few of the many - if by your prayers God thinks us worthy to grant a favourable wind of his spirit to us, embarked on the sea - we hope to enter safe harbour, following the course of the Word. Farewell. End of the prologue.

lis sce hildegardis uirginis.

IGITUR curationum tam po
tens gracia in beata uirgine emi
tuit: ut nullus fere egrotus acces
serit: qui non continuo sanitatem
receperit. Quod ex subiectis satis
liquebit exemplis.

De eo quod puellam sanauit
a tercianis.

Puella quedam nobilis hilde
gardis. parentes domum et
seculum relinquerat. sancte hil
degardis pie matris magisterio
deuote adheserat. Hec quodam tem
pore cum tercianis febribus uex
aretur. nec ullo remedio curare
tur: unicum sibi incidit consiliū:
ut sancte uirginis imploraret
auxilium. Que iuxta uerbum
domini. super egros manus impo
nent. et bene habebunt: manum
sibi imponens. cum benedictione
et precibus sanauit eam pro
pulsatis febribus.

Quod monachum ab eisdem
sanauit.

Subsequenti tempore frater
quidam Roricus qui in ea
dem cella sub monachico habitu
et proposito religiose conuersa
batur: simili modo tercianis a
criter torquebatur. Qui audi
ens in predicta sorore factum
miraculum. deuote et humilit
eius petijt et obtinuit benedictio
nis signaculum: ex quo statim fe
bris fugata est. egrotus curat(us) est.

Quod famulam a tumore
colli liberauit. .III.

In eodem cenobio bertha quedā
ancilla sororibus sedule seruie
bat. quam tumor pectoris et col
li uehementer angebat. Siqui
dem ad hoc dolor processerat.
quod nec cibum nec potum ca
pere: nec saliuam deglutire po
terat. Hec ad famulam dei ad
ducta. signis pocius quam uer
bis morbi morti iam proximi
flagitauit remedia. Cui illa cō
paciens: etiam propter boni ser
uicij sui assiduitatem. signo sce
crucis locis dolentibus contrec
tatis: optatam reddit sanitatē.

Quod sueuum de tumore to
cius corporis absoluit. .IIII.

Sueuus quidam de uico de
leuungun. toto corpore in
tumuit: et audita fama eius
emenso magno itinere ad eam
ueniens: spe sua frustratus
non fuit. Denique per aliquod
dies karitatiue eum secum de
tinuit. et manibus suis lan
guidum contrectans. et bene
dicens: per graciam dei pristi
ne incolomitati restituit.

Here begins the third book of the miracles of the holy nun Hildegard. Now such a powerful gift of healing was possessed by the holy nun that practically no sick person came to her who did not forthwith recover his health. This will be eminently clear from the following examples.

I. Where she cured a nun from a tertian.

A certain high-born girl, having withdrawn from parents, home and the world, joined herself in faithful obedience to the holy and pious mother Hildegard. At one time, when she was troubled by a tertian fever, which could not be cured by any remedy, the singular plan occurred to her, to ask the help of the holy nun. She, following the words of the Lord: "...they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover", and placing her hands on her with a blessing and prayers, drove out the fever and cured her.

II. That she cured a monk of the same thing.

At a later time, a certain brother Roricus who lived in the same monastery in the habit and religious vocation of a monk, was badly tormented by a tertian, in the same way. Hearing of the miracle performed on the sister, mentioned before, he humbly and devoutly sought to be signed with her blessing. When this was done, the fever was banished and the sick man was cured.

III. That she freed a servant-woman from a tumour of the neck.

In the same monastery a servant called Bertha had zealously served the nuns. She was sorely troubled by a tumour of the neck and chest. The disease had progressed to such a stage that she could neither eat, nor drink, nor swallow her saliva. When she was brought to the handmaid of God, almost at death's door, she asked by signs rather than words for a cure of her disease. Hildegard, taking pity on her, especially on account of the zeal of her good service, touched the diseased places with the sign of the cross and she recovered her health.

IIII. That she cured a Swabian with a swelling of his whole body.

A Swabian from the town of Dalkingen suffered a swelling of the entire body. Having heard of her reputation, he made an immensely long journey to reach her. And his hope was not in vain. For several days she kept him with her, out of charity, and touching and blessing the sufferer with her hands she restored him, through God's grace, to his former good health.

Quod infantem sex mensium de motu corporis horrendo liberauit.

Infans quidam de rudenesheim. symon. septem ebdomadas natus. miserabili motu menbrorum omnium fuit agitatus. qui a nutrice sua delatus. precibus eius deo annuente est sanatus.

vi Quendam remotum uirum de dolore gutturis sanauit

Non solum autem uicinis sed; etiam subueniebat longe positis. Quidam enim arnoldus de wacchernheim. olim sibi notus. guttur ita dolens. quod et halitum suum difficulter trahebat. quia per se non poterat. orationum eius suffragia deuote expetebat. Que confidens de dei misericordia aquam benedixit. amico misit. quam ut gustauit. dolor dei dono eum dimisit.

ii Puelle triduo non loquenti aqua quam benedixit. et loquelam et uitam restituit.

Mulieris cuiusdam hazzeche filia. de bingun. infirmabatur. et per triduum nichil loquebatur. Cumque mater currens pro filia sancte uirginis auxilium peteret. nichilominus benedictam a se accepit aquam. qua illa gustata. statim et uocem et uires recepit.

De eadem aqua iuuenis in extremis agens conualuit. viii

In eodem castro iuuenis quidam tanta egritudine detinebatur. quod iam in extremis esse putabatur. Huic prefata mulier cuius filia conualuerat. quam ad huc reliquam habuit aquam in potu dedit. et eius faciem inde abluit. et protinus receptis uiribus conualuit.

Quod de pane mense sue benedicto puellam liberauit. que insano iuuenis cuiusdam amore estuabat. viiii

In episcopatu treuirorum lutkardis. quedam nobilis puella. cum cuiusdam adolescentis ad carnem speciosi. uehementi amore deperiret. quia copiam explende uoluptatis sue pre sui custodia habere nequiret. parentes eius causa rescita huiuscemodi defectionis. consilium et auxilium sancte uirginis per nuncium fideliter expecierunt. et pro desiderio cordis sui efficaciter exaudiri meruerunt. Ipsa enim oratione ad deum premissa. panem profusis lacrimis benedixit de sua mensa. quem puelle missum cum dedisset. ad comedendum. ilico ardoris illius penitus in ea refriguit incendium.

Quod matrone transalpine litteras misit. per quas fluxus sanguinis restitit. x

Matrona etiam sibilla. de ciuitate lausamensi trans alpes. que eius adiutorium per nuncium

V. That an infant of six months was freed from terrible convulsions of the body. Simon, a seven-week old baby from Rudesheim was troubled by a distressing movement in all his limbs. He was brought by his nurse and with God's consent he was cured by Hildegard's prayers.

VI. She cured a man from far away of a disease of the throat. Hildegard helped not only those who were close at hand, but also those who lived at a distance. A man called Arnold, from Wackernheim, an old acquaintance, suffered such an affliction of the throat that he could only draw breath with difficulty. Because he could not come in person, he faithfully sought the aid of her prayers. She, trusting in God's mercy, blessed some water and sent it to her friend. When he tasted this the illness left him, by God's gift.

VII. She restored speech and life to a girl dumb for three days. The daughter of Hazecha, a woman of Bingen, fell ill and spoke no word for three days. The mother ran to seek the help of the holy nun for her girl. And so she obtained some water blessed by Hildegard. When the girl drank it she regained both her strength and her voice.

VIII. How a young man who was close to death recovered with the same water. In the same town, a certain young man was laid so low by illness that he was thought to be already at the point of death. The woman mentioned above, whose daughter had recovered, gave him what water she still had left to drink, and she washed his face with it. Immediately regaining his strength he got well.

VIIII. That she cured a girl with the blessed bread from her table, who burned with love for a young man. Lutgard, a well-born girl from the diocese of Trier was dying of love for a handsome youth, since she was unable to find an opportunity to fulfil her desires because of her chaperone. Her parents, having discovered the cause of her illness, sought in their faith, the advice and help of the holy virgin, by a messenger. They earned a successful hearing for their heart's desire. For Hildegard, having prayed to God, blessed the bread from her table, with many tears. When this was sent, they gave it to the girl to eat and immediately the flame of desire grew completely cold.

X. That she sent a letter to a woman from across the Alps by which she cured an issue of blood.

expostulauit missis et subiectis lit-
teris· a profluuio sanguinis libera-
uit. Hec inquit uerba circa pectus
et umbilicum tuum pones· in nomi-
ne illius qui recte omnia dispensat.
In sanguine ade orta est mors· in
sanguine xpi extincta est mors.
In eodem sanguine impero tibi o
sanguis· ut fluxum tuum contine-
as. Itaque ut diximus matrona pre-
fata hoc modo liberata est.

XI Quod ex capillorum eius circum-
cinctione· uxor scolteti in binguia
partus soluta est diuturno labore.

Nec hoc pretereundum quod cum
particule crinium uel uesti-
mentorum eius quibuscumque lan-
guidis apponebantur· pristine in-
colomitati restituebantur. Denique
uxor scolteti binguensis. cum par-
tu diutius laboraret· et de uita
iam desperaret· ad monasterium
uirginis dei ocius curritur· si ali-
quid ad subueniendum esset tan-
topere laboranti queritur. Puelle
eius restem capillorum eius. quam
aliquando seruauerant obtulerunt·
et ut hac ad nuda circumcingere-
tur monuerunt. Quod ut factum
est. illa partu feliciter edito· mor-
te liberata est.

XII Similiter alie due reste eadem
capillorum eius circumcincte·
liberate sunt a simili labore.

Similiter et alie due matrone
per eandem restim liberate sunt·
a simili parturitionis dolore.

XI Quod alie due mentis amencia
capte· sensum receperunt eadem
resti circumcincte.

Nec minus profuit duabus de
Sodernsheim mulieribus.
quas propter mentis amenciam.
cum parentes ad loca sanctorum
circumducerent· et nichil profi-
cerent· tandem ut a puellis trans-
missa ipsa resti circumcincte
fuerunt· ilico sospitatem men-
tis et corporis receperunt.

Quod iuuenem qui se suis
orationibus commendauit· per
uisum ab insidiis inimicorum
liberauit.

XI Quid illud quod eadem beata
uirgo etiam per ui-
sum eos premunire in necessita-
tibus uoluit· quos in orationibus
commendatos habuit. Iuuenis
de ederich Rodulfus. noctu in
parua uilla fuit hospitatus·
qui cum tempore quietis cubi-
tum iret· suffragia sancte uir-
ginis fuit precatus. Mira res.
Illa eodem scemate et habitu
quo in corpore fuit· per uisum
ei apparuit· et quod periculum
uite ab insidiantibus sibi inimi-
cis incurreret· si citius non rece-
deret aperuit. Qui statim ut
de loco cum quibusdam sociis

She cured a woman called Sybil, from the transalpine city of Lausanne who had asked her help by a messenger. When she sent her the following message she was cured. "Place these words", she said, "around your breast and waist in the name of the One who orders all things justly: 'Death originated in the blood of Adam; death was vanquished in the blood of Christ. In the same blood of Christ, I order you, O blood, to cease your flow.'" Then, as we said, the woman was duly cured.

XI. That the wife of a local official of Bingen was delivered from a protracted labour by a girdle of Hildegard's hair. Nor should I omit to say that when pieces of hair or clothing were placed on anyone who was ill, they were restored to their former health. So the wife of the mayor of Bingen had been too long in labour when, despairing of her life, a messenger was despatched post haste to the monastery of God's nun, to seek what might help one in such travail. The nuns obtained a cord of Hildegard's hair that they had been saving for some time, and advised her to tie this around her naked parts. When she did this she was saved from death and the birth happily accomplished.

XII. Similarly two other women were freed by tying the girdle of hair around them from like travail. In like manner two other women were freed from travail of birth by the same girdle.

XIII. That two mad women regained their wits when bound with the same. And it was no less effective in the case of two women from Staudernheim, who because of their madness had gone the rounds of saints' shrines with their parents. They obtained no relief until at last they were bound with that cord sent by the nuns and immediately regained health of body and mind.

XIIII. That she freed a young man, who had commended himself to her in his prayers, from the attacks of his enemies, by means of a vision. And what of the fact that the nun was willing to protect those who commended themselves in prayer to her, in their hour of need? Rudolph, a young man from Ederich, was lodged for the night in a small village. When he went to his night's rest, he prayed for the protection of the holy nun. A wonderful thing happened! She appeared to him in a vision in the same form and clothing as she had in reality. She revealed to him that he would be exposed to mortal danger from enemy attack if he did not immediately remove himself. He left the place at once with

discessit· quosdam illuc remoran
tes hostium phalanx circa mane
oppressit· qui se stulte egisse
cognouerunt· quia tempestiue
ad eius uisionem non recesserunt·

Quod militi in extremis po
sito uisum est quod ei manus
imposuit et statim surgens
conualuit·

Quamuis sit miraculosum
non tamen est
incredibile· quod sancte uirgi
ni adhuc in carne degenti· ho
minibus impendere beneficia
in spiritu fuit possibile· cum
ad declarandum eius meritum xpc
et tam absencium quam presen
cium desideria reuelare digna
tus est· per spiritum· Nam mili
tem quendam iuxta andernacum
in extremis iacentem· cum ami
ci eius inuiserent· et de rebus
suis consultarent· forte affuit ho
ra ut signo audito· relicta ad cus
todiam sola femina· ipsi ad eccle
siam properarent· At ille silen
cium nactus toto corde altis sus
pirijs deum inuocauit· et ut per
merita huius sancte uirginis
sanitatem sibi conferret· suppli
citer postulauit· Nec mora fini
ta oratione· recreari meruit ta
li uisione· Uidere sibi uideba
tur uenerabilem uirginem ad
se ingredientem· et si sanus fie
ri uellet blanditer inquirentem·
Quod ut oppido se desiderare re
tulit· illa capiti suo manum im
ponens subintulit· In nomine eius
qui dixit· super egros manus im
ponent et bene habebunt· infir
mitas ista a te recedat· et sanus
esto· Quo dicto· uisio disparuit·
et eger de lecto surgens· cum ad
miratione omnium qui conuene
rant conualuit·

Quod presbitero exposuit lit
teras in palla altaris inuentas·
unde ille correptus et correctus
monachus est effectus·

Non ab re uidetur etiam refer
re: quod de presbitero quo
dam factum est· quia et quedam
sancte uirginis uirtutum in eo
porcio est· et res digna miraculo
recte memorie in exemplum man
datur· quo negligenter quilibet
uiuens deo uolente emendatur·
Res in sueuia uico Rodenesheim
ita gesta est· Presbiter ille qua
dam uice peracto iam die cum
nox instaret intrauit ecclesiam
ut lumen sanctis daret· cum ec
ce uidit super altare duas can
delas ardentes radiare· Uenerat
secum iuuenis scolaris· in adiu
torio diuini officij sibi assiduus
et familiaris· Ad quem cum dice
ret quare candelas extinguere
neglexisset· et ille responderet·

some companions. Towards morning a band of the enemy fell on those who remained there. They knew that they had acted foolishly, since they had not withdrawn betimes according to the vision.

XV. That it seemed to a dying soldier that she put her hand on him and immediately he rose up and got well. Although amazing, it is not incredible that the holy nun was able to convey benefits on men in the spirit, although still in the flesh. For Christ deigned to reveal the desires both of those who were present and those who were absent, through the spirit, as an indication of her merits. Now a soldier was lying close to death near Andernach, and his friends, seeing this, took counsel about his affairs. By chance, it happened that the time came for them to hasten to church, summoned by the bell, and they left him in the care of just one woman. And he, left in peace and quiet, with deep sighs, called upon God with all his heart, and humbly begged for the restoration of his health, through the merits of the holy nun. Directly his prayer was finished, he was vouchsafed recovery by means of the following vision. He thought he saw the venerable nun approach him, kindly asking if he wished to be well. He replied that he wished it very much, and placing her hand on his head, she said, "In the name of Him who said: '...they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover', may this illness depart from you." When this was said, the vision faded and the sick man rose from his bed, to the admiration of all those who had gathered, quite recovered.

XVI. That a priest, finding letters on the altar cloth, rebuked and corrected, became a monk. And it does not seem inappropriate to mention what happened to a certain priest, for it provides an example of the virtues of the holy nun. Indeed, the event is worthy of record as a true miracle and it shows how someone living a heedless life may be changed for the better, if God wills. It happened in the town of Rudesheim, in Swabia (sic). One evening a priest entered the church as night was falling, to light the sanctuary, when, lo! he saw two burning candles alight on the altar. A young scholar accompanied him, a member of his household, and dutiful in assisting at the divine service. When the priest asked him why he had failed to put out the candles, he replied that he had put them out.

quod eas extinxisset. accessit sa
cerdos ad extinguendum. et in
uenit pallam altaris explicatā
sicut euoluitur ad diuinum sa
cramentum agendum. Cumque
daret stupefactus. iuuenis ille
corruens in terram clamauit et
iam ipse in extasim factus. Gla
dius domini occidit nos. Quem
cum presbiter percussum puta
ret. festinauit ut eum a terra le
uaret. sed ille nullam habens
lesionem. protulit hunc sermonē.
Si litteras que in palla altaris
sunt uiderimus. non moriemur.
Existimans autem eum hoc pre
timore ignoranter clamare. acces
sit iterum ad altare. et in loco
quo sacra conficiuntur. inuenit
in palla quinque litteras in mo
dum crucis absque humano ope
re scriptas. scilicet in expansio
ne. A. P. et H. in erectione. K. et
D. His uisis et diligenter nota
tis. iuuenis uiribus receptis e
rigitur. sacerdos palla compli
cata. et candelis extinctis. do
mum stupidus reuertitur.
Littere septem diebus durauerunt. octauo die et deinceps
non comparuerunt. Quod se
cum mirans religiosis et sa
pientibus factum innotuit.
sed quid portenderet. a nullo ho
minum experiri potuit. donec
post sedecim tandem annos cum
fama toti mundo beatam hilde
gardem spiritu sancto illustra
tam diuulgaret. ueniens ad eā
cognoscere meruit. sicut ipsa
per spiritum didicit. quid tan
tum oraculum designaret. Si
cut enim quondam daniel in
pariete uisas. sic ipsa in palla
descriptas. in hunc modum ex
posuit litteras. K. kyrie. P. pbr.
D. derisit. A. ascendat. P. peni
tens. H. homo. Quod ille audi
ens timore correptus. peccatri
cem accusat conscienciam. et
correctus et monachus effectus.
preterite uite negligencias e
mendare aggreditur per peni
tenciam. et sicut sancta uirgo
litteras exposuit. ad altiorem et
districtiorem uitam ascendens.
perfectum dei seruum se in scā
conuersatione exhibuit.

Quod multis ciuitatibus et
monasteriis uerbum dei an
nunciauit. XVII.

Inter hec etiam illud de se ipsa
est notabile. quod coloniam. tre
uerim. metim. herbipolim. ba
benberch. spiritu diuino non
modo acta sed coacta ueniens.
clero et populo que deus uolu
it annunciauit. et in monte sci
dysibodi. siberch. euerbach. hir
saugia. Zwuielden. Hoden.

The priest went up to extinguish them and found the altar cloth unfolded, as if spread out for the performance of the divine sacrament. And as he was staring at it, stupefied, the youth fell to the ground, and cried out in a trance "The sword of God has smitten us". The priest, thinking that he had been struck down, hastened to raise him from the ground. But the youth, having no injury, delivered these words: "If we see the letters on the altar cloth we will not perish". Now thinking that he was saying these things in ignorance and fear, the priest went again to the altar, and in the place where the sacrifice is performed, he found five letters, in the form of a cross, written on the cloth without human intervention. That is to say, the letters A, P and H, horizontally, and K and D, vertically. When the priest had seen and duly noted this, the young man got up, his strength recovered. The priest folded the cloth, blew out the candles and returned home, confounded. The letters remained for seven days and on the eighth, ceased to exist. The priest, amazed at himself, made known what had happened to wise and devout men. But what it meant could not be explained by anyone until at last, after sixteen years, the report that the blessed Hildegard was illuminated by the Holy Spirit spread throughout the whole world. He came to her and was permitted to know what such a great oracle meant, just as she learnt it from the Holy Spirit. As Daniel once described the writing on the wall, so she expounded the letters on the cloth. She explained the writing like this: K Kyrium, P Presbyter, D Derisit, A Ascendat, P Penitens, H Homo. The priest mocked the Lord, may he arise a penitent man! When he heard this he was gripped by fear and accused his sinful conscience. He changed for the better, became a monk, and began to amend the heedlessness of his former life with penitence. And as the holy nun interpreted the letters as ascending to a higher and more rigorous life, he showed himself to be a perfect servant of God by his holy and monastic living.

XVII. That she announced the word of God in many cities and monasteries.

At this point it should be noted that coming to Cologne, Trier, Metz, Wurzburg and Bamburg, not merely impelled, but compelled by the divine spirit, she announced what God wished to the clergy and people. Also in Disibodenberg, Siegburg, Eberbach, Hirsau, Zwifalten,

brunnen· Rodenkirchen· kirin-
gen· Grovchedal· herde· hagene-
uerde: Ardernacho· in monte
sancte marie· Melsun· et Winke-
lon· que ad utilitatem animarum
pertinebant· iuxta ea que ei
deus reuelauerat manifestauit

xviii· Quod ceco puerulo uisum re

Interea cum · sicut
iuxta uillam rudensheim reni
fluenta nauigio sulcaret· et ad
contiguum monasterium sancti
monialium properaret· quedam
mulier cecum puerulum ges-
tans in ulnis naui appropinqua-
uit· et ut ei sanctas manus im-
poneret flebiliter acclamauit·
Que pio affectu memor illius
qui dixit· Vade ad natatoria
syloe et laua· aquam fluuii si-
nistra hausit· et benedixit ma-
nu dextra· quam ut oculis pue-
ri iniecit· diuina fauente gra-
cia uisum recepit·

xviiii Quod quendam hominem
cum acaduco liberasset morbo·
et hoc ille conmaneis suis
propalasset multi ad eam ue-
nerunt et curati ab ipso lan-
guore redierunt·

Illo tempore homo quidam
caducum morbum acriter
paciebatur· uenerabilem uirgi-
nem ut sibi subueniret anxius
deprecabatur· Que salubri be-
nedictione ita eum consignauit·
quod a die illa et deinceps idem
morbus amplius eum non gra-
uauit· Qui cum domi nuncias-
set in se factum miraculum· mul-
ti pro remedio eiusdem morbi ad
eam properantes· per benedictio-
nis sue liberati sunt signaculum·

Quod inter cetera uirtutum
insignia demones eiciendi ei af-
fuit gracia et descriptio illius
de quadam
et de arte et fumositate diabo

Inter cetera autem · sicut · xx·
uirtutum insignia· data est a do-
mino sancte uirgini ab obsessis
corporibus demones eiciendi gracia·
sicut de quadam nobili et ad huc
tenere etatis femina describit
factum ipsa uenerabilis domina·
Ait enim· Postea quam me ui-
sio docuit· dictatum et uerba e-
wangelii iohannis· in lectum e-
gritudinis decidi· de cuius pon-
dere nullomodo me leuare potui·
Hec de flatu australis uenti in
me afflata est· unde corpus me-
um tantis doloribus contereba-
tur· quod anima uix sustinebat·
Post dimidium annum idem
flatus corpus meum ita perfo-
rauit· quod in tanto agone fui·
quasi anima mea de hac uita
transire deberet· Tunc alius
uentosus flatus aquarum huic

Maulbronn, Rodenkirchen, Kitzingen, Krauftal, Hordt, Honigen, Werden, Andernach, Marienberg, Klause and Winkel, she made clear what pertained to the health of souls, according to what God had revealed to her.

XVIII. That she restored the sight of a blind boy. While she was travelling by boat, on the Rhine, near the town of Rudesheim, hastening to her nearby cloister of nuns, a woman approached the boat. Weeping, and holding in her arms a little boy who was blind, she begged that Hildegard might place her holy hands on him. And she, remembering with pious feeling Him who said: "Go to the pool of Siloe and wash", dipped her left hand in the river water and blessed him with her right. And when she put it in the boy's eyes, his sight returned by the favour of divine grace.

XVIIII. That when she freed a man from the falling sickness he told this to his fellow villagers and many came to her and returned cured of that affliction.Another time, a man who was suffering severely from epilepsy anxiously begged the venerable nun to help him. She signed him with a healing benediction, and from that day forth, the disease ceased to trouble him. When he went home and announced that a miracle had been performed on him, many, hastening to her for a cure of the same disease, were freed through the signing of her blessing.

XX. That among her other excellent virtues, she had the gift of casting out demons; and her description of it, and the wiles and obfuscations of demons.Among her other exceptional virtues, grace was given to the holy virgin, by the Lord, to cast out demons from the bodies of the possessed. This is how the venerable mistress described what was done in the case of a certain noble woman of tender years. For she said: "After the vision taught me the words and precepts of John the Evangelist, I retired to my sickbed, so ill that I could by no means raise myself. This was caused in me by the blast of the south wind, and my body suffered such pain that my spirit could scarcely endure. After six months, that blast had so pierced through my body that I was in extreme agony, as if I should give up the ghost. Then another blast of damp wind mixed itself with the heat,

calori se admiscuit. unde caro
mea aliqua parte refrigerabatur
ne ex toto combureretur. Sic per
integrum annum afflicta sum.
sed tamen in uera uisione uidi
quod uita mea in temporali cur
su nec dum finiretur. sed adhuc
aliquantum protraheretur.

Preterea michi relatum est quod
in inferioribus reni partibus a
nobis remotis. quedam nobilis
femina a diabolo esset obsessa.
Nuncii quoque de hac ad me se
pius uenerunt. At ego in uera
uisione uidi. quod ipsa permissi
one dei quadam nigredine et fu
mo diabolice conglobositatis ob
sessa erat et obumbrata. que totam
sensualitatem rationalis anime
illius opprimebat. nec eam ele
uato intellectu suspirare permit
tebat. uelut umbra hominis
aut alterius rei. uel fumus op
posita obtegit et perfundit. unde
hec rectos sensus et actus perde
bat. et inconuenientia sepius
clamabat et faciebat. Sed cum
hoc malum iussione dei in illa
adtenuabatur. tunc lenius gra
uabatur. Et me cogitante et
scire uolente. quomodo diabo
lica forma hominem intraret.
uidi et responsum audiui. quod
diabolus in forma sua homine
ut est non intrat. sed eum um
bra et fumo nigredinis sue
inumbrat et obtegit. Si enim for
ma illius hominem intraret
citius umbra eius solueretur
quam stipula a uento disperga
tur. Quapropter deus non per
mittit quod hominem in forma
sua intret. sed supra dictis per
fundens ad insaniam et in con
uenientia euertit. et per eum
quasi per fenestram uocifera
tur. et membra illius exterius
mouet. cum tamen in eis in for
ma sua interius non sit. anima
interim quasi sopita et ignoran
te quid caro corporis faciat. De
inde uidi predicte artis et per
uersitatis agmen malignorum
spirituum qui totum mundum
pertranseunt. querentes ubi in
ueniant eos per quos scisma
ta et diuersitates morum faci
ant. Hii ab initio ut creati sunt
coram iustissimis angelis deum
contempserunt dicentes. Quis
est iste qui tantam potestatem
habet super nos. Hoc in inui
dia. odio et irrisione dicentes.
adhuc in his perseuerant. et
omnia in his faciunt. quia
errorem irrisionis primi in
ceperunt. Quoniam uero deus
populum per istos purgare
uult. permissione et iussio
ne eius stuporem in aere

so that part of my body was cooled and I was not entirely burnt up. I suffered like this for a whole year, but I saw in true vision that my life would be prolonged yet a little while. Meanwhile it reached my ears that far away in the lower parts of the Rhine, a certain noblewoman was obsessed by a devil. Frequent messengers came to me from her. And I saw in a true vision that she had been obsessed and overcome, with God's permission, by the darkness and obscurity of devilish accumulations which overwhemed the sensation of her rational soul and did not allow her higher understanding to breathe. So too, the shadow of a man or some other thing, or smoke, conceals and obscures what it covers. So she forgot right thought and action, and all too often cried out and behaved in an unseemly manner. But when, at God's command, this evil was reduced in her, she was more lightly afflicted. And I, pondering and wishing to learn how the diabolical form enters man, saw and heard this reply. The devil does not enter man in his own shape, as he is, but darkens and clouds him with the gloom and smoke of his own blackness. For if he were to enter man in his own shape, his parts would immediately be dissolved as straws are scattered by the wind. Therefore God does not allow the devil to enter man in his own form. But disturbing him, as described above, he turns the person to insanity and unseemliness. He shouts through him, as through a window, and operates his parts from outside, since he is not inside, in his own form. Meanwhile, the soul, as if asleep, does not know what the flesh of the body is doing. Then I saw a great host of wicked spirits, cunning and wily, as mentioned above, who travel the whole world, seeking to find those through whom they can create schism and divisive behaviour. From the very beginning, when they were created in the presence of the most just angels, they scorned God, saying: 'Who is he who has such power over us?' They said this in envy, hatred and mockery and have continued thus, to this day. Since they erred in the beginning through mockery, they have done all things in this spirit. And when God wishes to purge his people through them, by his express permission, they stir up wonders in the air,

[?]mouent. ac per spumam ae
[?] pestilenciam euomunt atq;
[i]nundationes. et pericula in a
quis faciunt. bella excitant.
aduersitates et mala produ
cunt. Hoc deus tunc fieri per
mittit. cum homines per arro
ganciam criminibus ac homi
cidiis inuoluuntur. Sed cum
deus populum suum sic purga
uerit. eosdem spiritus in confu
sionem ducit. sicut in prefata
muliere contigit. Cum enim ne
quam spiritus deo permittente
plures per eam propter prauos
mores et peccata que eis p(er)sua
serat. palam confunderet. qui
busdam exterritis et pro hoc
penitentibus idem malignus
spiritus confusus est. Nam d(omi)n(u)s
amicos suos aduersitatibus
et infirmitatibus affligi p(er)mit
tit. ut a malis purgentur.
unde inimici confundiuntur.
cum electi per purgationem ful
genciores lapides coram deo ef
ficiuntur. Cumq; mulier illa
per plurima loca ad sanctos es
set deducta. spiritus qui eam
oppresserat. deuictus meritis
sanctorum et uotis populo(rum)
uociferabatur. quod in superi
oribus reni partibus uetula
quedam esset. per cuius consi
lium expellendus foret. Q(uo)d

amici eius percipientes. octauo
anno fatigationis sue ad nos
eam sicut d(omi)n(u)s uoluit p(er)duxerunt.

De epistolis ad se et a se mis
sis pro prefata demoniaca. xxi.

Operę precium est hoc in loco
ante quam uerba uirginis
xpi ulterius prosequamur. e
pistolas inserere. quas abbas de
Brunwilre sibi. et ipsa uicissim
illi de hac demoniaca uoluit
mittere. ut ex his apcius intel
ligatur et diaboli nequicia. et
laudentur propensius licet oc
culta. semper tamen iusta iu
dicia dei. Cum enim post septe(m)
annos ipsa mulier brunwilre
adduceretur. ut ibi meritis s(an)c(t)i
Nicolai liberaretur. nequam spi
ritus coniuratus dixit se suum
non relicturum uasculum. nisi
per cuiusdam uetule in superio
ribus reni partibus sicut ipsa
supradixerat consilium et auxi
lium. nomen eius euertens. et
quod scrumpilgardis uocaretur
deridens. Itaq; consilium inie
runt. et litteras deprecatorias
in hunc modum miserunt.

H. domine et epistola.
matri uenerande totisq; uisce
ribus amplectende. xpi sponse
et regis altissimi filie. G. qualis
cumq; Brunwillarensis cenobii
prouisor. cum suis fratribus in

and spew out pestilential vapours, and cause floods and perils in the waters, incite wars, and produce troubles and evils. God allows these things to happen when men are involved in crimes and murders through pride. But when God has thus chastised his people, he confounds these spirits, just as he did in the case of the woman already mentioned. For although the evil spirit, with God's permission, clearly confounded many people through the woman, because of the depravity and sins to which she had incited them, the same malignant spirit was routed by certain others who were terrified and did penance. For God allows his friends to be afflicted with trials and tribulations so that they may be purged of evil. So his enemies are confounded while the elect are changed by this trial into brighter stones in the sight of God. So when that woman had been conducted around numerous shrines, the spirit which had oppressed her cried out - overcome by the merits of the saints and the prayers of the people - that there was a certain old woman in the region of the upper Rhine, whose counsel would expel him. Understanding that, her friends brought her to us in the eighth year of her affliction, as the Lord willed."

XXI. Concerning the letters which were sent to and from her on behalf of this demoniac. It is worthwhile, at this point, before pursuing further the words of Christ's nun, to insert the letters which the Abbot of Brauweiler wished to send to her, and she in turn to him, about this demoniac woman. From these, the wickedness of devils may be more clearly understood, and the judgments of God, sometimes hidden, but always just, may be more readily praised. The woman was brought to Brauweiler, after seven years, to be liberated there by the merits of St Nicholas. When conjured, the wicked spirit said that it would not leave its vessel, except through the aid and counsel of a certain old woman from the upper Rhine, just as she said above. It parodied her name, calling her "Crumplegard", in mockery. So, taking counsel, they sent her a humble letter in this wise:

To mistress Hildegard, our venerable mother and bride of Christ, worthy of our most heartfelt embrace, daughter of the most high king, Abbot Gedolphus, such as he is, of the monastery of Brauweiler, and his

ualle lacrimarum sedentibus ut
possunt in orationibus omnimode
dilectionis deuotum famulatum.
Quamuis aman[illegible]tissima dña
facie nobis sitis [illegible] incognita.
uirtutum tamen uestrarum fama
nobis estis celeberrima. et licet
absentes simus corpore. spiritu
tamen uobis presentes sumus
assidue. et qualis sit erga uos
nostre dilectionis affectus. nouit
scienciarum dominus. Auditum
itaq; est in terra nostra et celebri
sermone uulgatum uerbum hoc
quod factum est de uobis a dño
qui fecit uobis magna qui potens
est. et sanctum nomen eius. Sed
et quibus quantisq; miraculis
in uobis clarescat fons uiuide
lucis. iam nouit tam clerus quam
populus. et rerum protestatur
euentus. Nam in uobis fulget
opus non humanum sed diuinu.
gracia precedens donum prepol
lens. quod non dictat humana
ratio. sed quod procedit ex fon
te lucidissimo. Sed quid mora
mur. Flere magis libet quam
loqui. Ergo sanctitatis uestre o
domina piissima dulcedo non
reputet temeritati. quod in sim
plicitate cordium. sed nimia ne
cessitate compellente aperire
uobis causam necessitatis nre
presumimus. quoniam a uobis

bonum consilium recipere no[illegible]
bitamus. Nam quedam nobil[illegible]
femina a maligno spiritu per [illegible]
quod annos obsessa. per amicorum
manus ad nos deducta peruenit.
quatinus adiutorio beati Nico
lai sub cuius patrocinio sumus
ab hoste imminenti liberaretur.
Sed uersucia et nequicia calli
dissimi et nequissimi hostis tot
hominum fere milia duxit in
errorem et dubium. quod eccle
sie sancte maximum timemus
detrimentum. Nam omnes
nos cum multitudine populi
pro liberatione femine istius
iam per tres menses multis mo
dis laborauimus. et quod sine
merore dicere non possumus
peccatis nostris exigentibus
nichil profecimus. Omnis itaq;
spes nostra post deum in uobis
est. Demon enim iste nunc qua
dam die coniuratus tandem ma
nifestauit nobis mulierem hanc
obsessam liberandam esse per
uirtutem uestre contemplatio
nis et magnitudinem diuine
reuelationis. Numquid non
magna in eius liberatione in
tendit deus. Utiq; Ita q; lar
gissima benignitas nostri re
demptoris laborem nostri ne
gocii et meroris. sed et leticie
et exultationis per uos plenius

brothers, sitting in the vale of tears, offer in their prayers, as far as they can, and in every way, the devoted service of their love. Wherefore, most beloved mistress, although your face is unknown to us, the fame of your virtues is very well known among us; and although we are absent in body, we are indeed with you in spirit, and the Lord who knows all, knows how great our love is towards you. So in our land, this news has been heard and noised abroad - what has been done about you by the Lord. He has done great things by you, who is powerful, and his name is holy. Now both the clergy and people know that the fountain of living light shines through you in such great miracles, and the outcome of events bears witness to this. For in you shines a work, not human, but divine; a surpassing grace and most remarkable gift which human reason does not order, but which proceeds from the pellucid fountain. But why delay? We should rather weep than talk. Therefore, O most pious mistress, let not the sweetness of your sanctity repulse our boldness when we presume in the simplicity of our hearts, compelled by great need, to open to you the reason for our importunity. We do not doubt that we will receive good counsel from you. A certain noble woman, obsessed by an evil spirit these many years, was brought to us by her friends, to gain the help of the blessed Nicholas, our patron, to free her of the devil that beset her. The cunning and wickedness of this most sly and wanton enemy led almost a thousand people into error and doubt, which we fear was a great pity for holy church. Now all of us laboured, together with a multitude of people, for the liberation of this woman for three months, in all sorts of ways. But - we cannot say it without sadness - since our sins weighed upon us, we achieved nothing. Thus all our hope is in you, after God. Now one day when the devil was conjured, at last it revealed to us, that this obsessed woman should be liberated by the virtue of your contemplation and the mightiness of your divine revelation. Did not God purpose great things in her liberation? Assuredly, therefore, the most abundant kindness of our Redeemer was thought fit to crown the labour of our work and tribulation, and also our joy and exultation. And this would be done

[...]e consummare dignabitur. ut et omnis error et infidelitas hominum adnichiletur. et obsessa famula dei liberetur. ut dicamus cum propheta. A domino factum est istud. et est mirabile in oculis nostris. et laqueus contritus est. et nos liberati sumus. Quicquid ergo deus de his uobis inspirauerit. seu uisione reuelauerit. nobis sanctitas uestra litteris designare studeat. obnixe et humiliter deprecamur.

Cum que beata hildegardis litteras istas suscepisset. diligenter que perspexisset. rogantibus pie condolens. omnes sorores monuit. ut pro prefata necessitate publicis et priuatis orationibus humiliter insisterent. ipsa que oratione premissa oculos mentis ad dominum leuabat. et responsum hoc secundum quod in uera uisione uidit et audiuit. et non per alium quam per inhaustam sapienciam dictatum ita rescripsit.

G. ecclesie T. sitbrunwilarensis abbati.

H. cum flagellis dei sim longa et graui egritudine constricta. uix aliquantulum peticioni uestre respondere ualeo. Hec a me non dico. sed ab illo qui est. Diuersa genera malignorum spirituum sunt. hoc uero demonium de quo queritis has artes habet que [illegible] moribus hominum uiciis [illegible] assimilantur. unde et cum hominibus libenter manent. ac ideo etiam crucem domini et reliquia sanctorum ac cetera que ad seruicium dei pertinent aliquantum negligit et deridet. nec multum pertimescit. Ea quidem non diligit. sed fugere dissimulat. uelut aliquis stultus et negligens homo uerba et minas que sibi a sapientibus inferuntur paruipendet. quapropter et difficilius quam aliud demonium expellitur. Nam non nisi flagellis. ieiuniis. orationibus. elemosinis. ac ipso iussu dei eicietur. Audite ergo et non responsum hominis. sed ipsius qui uiuit. Eligite septem sacerdotes boni testimonii. et quos uite meritum commendat. [primum scilicet] in nomine et ordine. Abel. [secundum in nomine] Noe. [tertium in nomine] Abraham. [quartum in nomine] Melchisedech. [quintum in nomine] Jacob. [sextum in nomine] et Aaron. qui omnes uiuenti deo sacrificium obtulerunt. septimum [autem] in nomine Christi qui se ipsum deo patri in cruce obtulit. et ieiuniis flagellis. orationibus. elemosinis. et missarum celebrationibus premissis. humili intentione et [humili] habitu sacerdotali cum stolis ad paci

entem a / stantes / gam / uirge / re rubr / dei perc / uirgam / hic pess / se ipsu / tem sep / septem / tus dei / super a / in facie / uite. sp / homine / primus / uirgam / Audi m / quicum / audi ue / premed / est et qu / tera. Cu / istas sp / perfecisse / quem o / libro sci / lum ubi / ut supe / rentur. / ad locu / tum est / cula fe / me et

most fully through you so that all error and faithlessness of man might be brought to nothing, and the obsessed handmaid of God set free. Then we could say with the Prophet, "This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes", and "the snare is broken, and we are escaped". We humbly and earnestly pray, therefore, that whatever God inspired you with in this matter, or revealed by a vision, your holiness may take care to set down in writing.

And when the blessed Hildegard received the letter she examined it carefully, and piously sympathising with the petitioners, she advised all her nuns to dwell humbly in their public and private prayers on this problem. And she, uttering a prayer, lifted the eyes of her mind to the Lord and sent back this reply, according to what she saw and heard in true vision, and composed by none other than the inexhaustible Wisdom.

Hildegard, to Gedolphus, Abbot of the monastery of Brauweiler: Since I have long been constrained with a serious illness by the flail of God, I have for some time been scarcely able to respond to your request. I do not say these things from myself, but from Him who Is. There are different kinds of wicked spirits. The demon about which you inquire has the power to make human behaviour vicious, and then it willingly remains with the person. It will even spurn and mock the Lord's cross, the relics of the saints and other things that pertain to God's service, being afraid of little. They do not set store by those things, and they feign flight, just as a foolish and heedless man treats lightly the words and warnings of the wise. And so it is more difficult to expel than another demon. For it will not be cast out except by fasting, scourging, prayers, alms and the command of God himself. Hear therefore the reply, not of man, but of Him who lives: Choose seven priests of good repute, who are commended by the merit of their lives (i.e., the first) in the name and order of Abel, (the second in the name of) Noah, (the third in the name of) Abraham, (the fourth in the name of) Melchisidek, (the fifth in the name of) Jacob and (the sixth in the name of) Aaron, who (all) offered sacrifice to the living God (and) the seventh in the name of Christ who offered himself to God the Father, on the cross. After fasts, scourgings, prayers, almsgiving and the celebration of masses let them approach the patient with humble intention and in the (humble) priestly vestments with their stoles (signed with the third sign, that is with stoles hanging around them).

entem accedant. et eam circum
stantes. unusquisque eorum uir
gam in manu teneat. in figura
uirge qua moyses egyptum. ma
re rubrum. petramque precepto
dei percussit. ut sicut deus ibi per
uirgam miracula ostendit. ita et
hic pessimo hoste uirgis eiecto.
se ipsum glorificet. In figura au
tem septem donorum spiritus sancti
septem sacerdotes erunt. ut spiri
tus dei qui in initio ferebatur
super aquas. et qui inspirauit
in faciem hominis spiraculum
uite. spiritum inmundum ab
homine fatigato exsufflet. Et
primus qui in nomine abel erit.
uirgam in manu tenens dicat.
Audi maligne et stulte spiritus
quicumque in homine isto habitas
audi uerba hec non per hominem
premeditata. sed per illum qui
est et qui uiuit manifestata. et ce
tera. Cumque sancta uirgo litteras
istas spiritu sancto reuelante
perfecisset per manus hominis
quem occulte quesierat. sicut in
libro sciuias dicit ad monasteri
um ubi mulier tenebatur misit
ut super eam humiliter recita
rentur. Cumque uenisset lector
ad locum illum ubi in fine scrip
tum est. et ego indocta et paup
ercula feminea forma. o plasphe
me et derisor spiritus tibi dico

in illa ueritate. qua ego pauper
cula et indocta forma de lumi
ne sapientie. hec uidi et audiui.
et per eandem sapientiam tibi pre
cipio ut de ista homine in uera
stabilitate. et non in turbine in
stabilitatis tue exeas. Idem nequam
spiritus totus infremuit. ac tan
tos ululatus cum horridis cla
moribus eiulando emisit. quod
astantibus maximum terrorem
incussit. Et dum his fere per
dimidiam horam bachando insi
stisset. tandem ut deo placuit.
uas quod diu possederat reliquit.
Mulier cum se liberatam esse
sensit. manus astantibus por
rexit ut eam erigerent. quia
uires non habuit. Tunc ante
principale sancti Nicholai se
prostrauit. et gracias deo pro sui
liberatione egit. Populis hec
cernentibus et ut uulgus solet
perstrepentibus. sed et gracias
et laudes deo cum signorum
pulsationibus resonantibus.
fratribus quoque ymnum te deum
laudamus canentibus. heu quod
miserabile est dictu idem anti
quus hostis occulto dei iudicio
rediit. et uas quod reliquerat
repeciit. unde femina tota con
tremiscens. et cum stridore et
clamore se erigens. plus quam
prius insanire cepit. Unde

And let each one of them standing around her (individually), hold a rod in his hand, as a symbol of the rod with which Moses, at God's command, struck Egypt, the Red Sea, and the rock. And just as God showed miracles there, through a rod, so he will glorify himself by casting out this dreadful enemy by means of the rod. The seven priests will also represent the seven gifts of the holy spirit, as the spirit of God, which moved over the waters in the beginning, and who breathes the breath of life in the face of man, and blew out the unclean spirit from the man afflicted. And the first, in the name of Abel, holding his rod in his hand, shall say: "Hear, O wicked and foolish spirit, wheresoever you dwell in this person, hear these words not devised by man, but made manifest by Him who Is, etcetera". * And when the holy nun had finished this letter, revealed by the Holy Spirit, she sent it to the monastery where the woman was held, by the hand of the man whom she had secretly sought out, as she says in the book Scivias, and it was recited humbly over her. And when the reader came to the place at the end of the writing where it says: "and I, a poor, weak, unlettered woman say to you, O blasphemous and mocking spirit, in that truth by which I, a poor, unlearned woman saw and heard these things from the light of Wisdom, I admonish you by that same Wisdom to leave this woman in true steadfastness and not in the whirlwind of your instability", then the wicked spirit bellowed and uttered such howls, wailing with awful cries, that he aroused great terror in those who were standing by. Raving like this for almost half an hour, at last it left the vessel that it had so long possessed, as it pleased God. When the woman felt herself freed, she stretched out her hands to those who were standing by, so that they could raise her up, since she had not the strength. Then she prostrated herself before the principal altar of St Nicholas and gave thanks to God for her liberation. And seeing this, the common people made a great noise, as is their wont. They gave praise and thanks to God with resonant pealing of bells, while the brothers sang the Te deum. But alas, how wretched it is to relate, by a hidden judgment of God, the same old enemy returned, and sought once more the vessel it had left. Then the woman shook all over, and rising, hooting and shrieking, became more insane than before.

exterritis qui aderant · et mesticia
completis · nequam spiritus inter-
rogatus cur repetere ausus
fuisset creaturam dei quam re-
liquerat respondit · Signum
crucifixi exterritus fugi · sed
cum nescirem quo ire · uas me-
um uacuum et non signatum
repetij · Cumque prefatis litte-
ris et coniurationibus sancte
uirginis ut exiret cogeretur
frendens clamabat · quod non
nisi inpresencia eiusdem ue-
tule egrederetur · Tunc qui
sanioris erant consilij amicis
et tutoribus femine persuase-
runt · ut ad beatam uirginem
eam perducerent · Accepta ita-
que abbatis et fratrum bene-
dictione cum commendaciis
litteris ceperunt illo ire · Lit-
tere autem in hunc modum
erant · epistola

H · venerabili domine omni
graciarum actione digne ·
G · Brunsvilarensium abbas
indignus cum suis fratribus
uiuere · proficere · mundum
pede subter habere · et quicquid
famule xpi excellencius potest
operari · Quod dominus uos
respexit · graciamque suam uo-
bis infudit · iam totus mun-
dus nouit · sed nos que hacte-
nus per nuncios nostros et lit-
teras pro necessitate mulieris
maligno spiritui obsesse sanctitati
uestre locuti sumus · nunc sal-
tem per personam ipsius cum
magna spe ad uos directam · uer-
bum necessitatis repetimus · et
preces precibus deuote super-
addimus · ut quanto magis est
uobis uicina corporaliter eo am-
plius sitis ei propicia spiritualiter ·
Nam demon litteris uestris ·
quas spiritu sancto dictante
nobis misistis coniuratus · uas
possessum per breuem horam
reliquerat · sed heu nescimus
quo iudicio dei redijt · uasque de-
relictum denuo inuadens · illud
nunc acrius quam prius fati-
gat · Nobis autem iterum eum
coniurantibus et fortiter ei in-
sistentibus tandem respondit ·
quod uas possessum non nisi
in presencia uestra relinquat ·
Ea propter ipsam ad sanctita-
tem uestram mittimus · ut quod
nos peccatis nostris exigenti-
bus non meruimus · per uos
compleat dominus · et antiquo
hoste electo · ille qui potens su-
per omnes est in uobis glori-
ficetur · Valeat materna di-
lectio uestra ·

Quod post septem annos
ad se ducta · octauo tandem
meritis eius curata est ·

His epistolis
uidetur
uim defleru
uideamus q
ginis sue gl
diu huius
rationem · P
tens deus et
quos circum
rat pro obse
batur presta
miraculi in
transferens ·
litatem eiud
suo tempore
qualiter acci
melius cogn

Me aduen
multum
quomodo ea
re possemus
populus per
commotus
uitatis sue
absque horror
tacula soror
uirorum ea
inceps nec
fusione qu
tes pro pecc
irrisorijs u
quibus noe
pro pessimo
nus cessim
ipsa mulie

And when the terrified bystanders, full of sorrow, asked the wicked spirit why it had boldly sought out God's creature again, after leaving her, it replied: "I fled, terrified, at the sign of the Cross. But since I did not know where to go, I returned to my empty and unblessed vessel." And when the letter and conjuration of the holy nun was repeated, so that it might depart, it declared, gnashing its teeth, that it would only emerge in the presence of the old woman. Then those of wiser counsel persuaded the friends and guardians of this woman to take her to the blessed nun. And having received the blessing of the abbot and monks, they set off there with a letter of recommendation. The letter went like this:

To the venerable mistress Hildegard, worthy of every act of grace, Gedolphus, unworthy Abbot of Brauweiler, together with his brothers, wishes her to live, flourish and have the world under her foot, and whatever more exalted thing might be done for the servant of God. Already the whole world knows that God looked with favour on you and filled you with grace. But we, who till now spoke to your holiness through our letters and messengers about the problem of the woman obsessed by the wicked spirit, at last, with great hope, repeat the outline of our problem through the person herself, faithfully heaping prayer on prayer, in the hope that the closer your physical proximity, the greater will be the spiritual benefit. For the demon, conjured by the letter which you sent, dictated by the Holy Spirit, left the possessed vessel for a brief while. But alas, we know not by what judgment of God it returned, invading the vessel it had abandoned, to trouble it again more fiercely than before. When we conjured it again and pressed it closely, it replied that it would not leave the possessed vessel except in your presence. Therefore, we send her to your holiness so that what we could not merit because of the pressure of our sins, God may complete through you. And when the old enemy is cast out, He who is powerful above all, may be glorified in you. May your maternal love flourish.

XXII. That when she was brought to her after seven years she was cured by her, in the eighth year.

His epistolis prelibatis congruum uidetur ut ab hoc quo paululum deflexit oratio reuocetur. et uideamus quomodo deus ad uirginis sue glorificationem tam diu huius femine distulit liberationem. Poterat enim omnipotens deus et per alios sanctos ad quos circumducta tot annis fuerat pro obsessa facile quod petebatur prestare. sed gloriam huius miraculi in sanctam uirginem transferens. meritorum eius qualitatem euidenter cunctis uoluit suo tempore manifestare. Quod qualiter acciderit. ex uerbis ipsius melius cognosci poterit.

De aduentu inquit mulieris multum exterriti fuimus. quomodo eam uidere uel audire possemus. de qua plurimus populus per tot tempora erat commotus. Sed deus rorem suauitatis sue super nos pluit. et absque horrore et tremore in habitacula sororum absque adiutorio uirorum eam locauimus. et deinceps nec pro horrore nec pro confusione qua demon superuenientes pro peccatis confudit. nec pro irrisoriis uel turpibus uerbis quibus nos superare uoluit. nec pro pessimo flatu suo et ullatu nus cessimus. Et uidi quod in ipsa muliere tres cruciatus passus est. primum cum illa de loco ad locum sanctorum ducta est. Secundum cum communis populus elemosinas pro ea dabat. Tercium cum per orationes spiritualium ex gracia dei abire compulsus est. Itaque a purificatione sancte Marie nos et comprouinciales nostri utriusque sexus. ieiuniis. orationibus. elemosinis. et corporum castigationibus usque in sabbatum pasche pro ipsa laborauimus. Interim per dei potenciam coactus inmundus spiritus multa de salute baptismi de sacramento corporis Christi de periculo excommunicatorum. de perditione chatharorum et his similium. ad confusionem sui. ad gloriam Christi coram populo quamuis inuitus protulit. unde multi fortiores ad fidem. multi promptiores effecti sunt ad peccatorum emendationem. Sed ubi illum falsa proferre in uera uisione uidi. statim illum redargui. unde mox conticescens dentibus in me frendebat. loqui uero illum propter populum non prohibui. cum uera proferebat. Denique sabbato sancto cum fons baptismatis consecraretur per flatum sacerdotis quem in fontem mittit cum

Having had a foretaste in these letters, it seems fitting that our speech be recalled from this short diversion. Now let us see how God delayed the liberation of the woman for so long for the glorification of his handmaid. Now the Almighty had the power of easily fulfilling what was sought for the possessed woman, even through the other saints to whom she had been taken for so many years. But, transferring the glory of this miracle to the holy nun, he evidently wished to reveal the nature of her merits to all men, in his own time. What happened can be better learnt from her own words.

"We were greatly alarmed", she said, "about the coming of this woman, and how we would see and hear her, who had for so long been the cause of agitation to so many people. But God let the dews of his mercy fall upon us, and without terror or trembling, we lodged her in the sisters' dwelling, without assistance from the men. And from that time we never slackened - not for terror, nor for the disorder with which the demon confused those who pressed upon it for its sins, nor for the mocking or filthy words with which it sought to overcome us, nor for its terrible breath. And I saw it suffer three torments in that woman. The first was when she was taken from shrine to shrine; the second was when the common people gave alms for her; the third was when it was compelled to leave, through the prayers of the clergy, by the grace of God. So from the Purification of St Mary, until the Saturday before Easter, the men and women of our region laboured for her, with fasting, prayer, almsgiving and mortification of the flesh. Meanwhile, the wicked spirit, constrained by the power of God, although unwilling, uttered many things before the people about the saving power of baptism, the sacrament of the body of Christ, the danger of excommunication, the damnation of the Cathars and their like, to his own confusion and Christ's glory. Then many were made stronger in the faith and more eager to atone for their sins. But when I saw in true vision that it was speaking falsehoods, I refuted it at once, and it soon grew quiet, gnashing its teeth at me. Yet I did not prevent it from addressing the people when it was speaking the truth. Then came Holy Saturday, when the baptismal font was consecrated by the breath of

uerbis que spiritus sanctus ra
cionalitati hominis et doctori
bus ecclesie infudit. quoniam
in prima creatione spiritus do
mini super aquas mouit sicut
scriptum est spiritus domini
ferebatur super aquas. muli
er illa presens ibi erat. atque
timore magno correpta ita con
tremuit. quod terram pedibus
perfodit. et de horribili spiri
tu qui eam oppresserat suffla
tum sepe emisit. Vox in ue
ra uisione uidi et audiui quod
uis altissimi que sanctum
baptisma obumbrauerat et
semper obumbrat. ad diaboli
cam conglobositatem qua femi
na illa fatigabatur dixit. Va
de sathanas de tabernaculo
corporis mulieris huius et da
in eo locum spiritui sancto.
Tunc immundus spiritus per
uerecundiam femine cum egres
sione horribiliter egressus est.
et ipsa liberata est. ac deinceps
sana in sensibus anime et cor
poris permansit. quamdiu in
presenti seculo uixit. Quod
postquam in populum diuul
gatum est. omnes cum canti
cis laudum et uerbis oratio
num dicebant. Gloria tibi do
mine. Itaque ut deus permisit

quod sathan totum corpus iob
horrore et fetore uermium perfun
deret. et ut ille estimabat quod
per deceptionem suam qua homo
rem dei abnegauerat. istum eti
am superare posset deo animam
eius custodiente tangere eum
non potuit. quia iob deum in
fide non dereliquit. unde et
confusus ab eo discessit. quia
deus per ipsum sathan supera
uit. ut sciret quoniam deo nul
lus preualere posset. Sicut et
hec mulier cum maligno spi
ritu ad uexandum tradeba
tur. deus non permisit quod
anima eius in bona fide defi
ceret. unde et inimicus in ea
confusus est. quia a iusticia dei
eam auertere non potuit.

Quod quadraginta diebus
grauiter infirmabatur. et
cum uerba dei ad quosdam
spirituales deferret. alleuia
batur.

His et [illegible]
huiuscemodi uerbis uirgo
dei diuine misericordie opera
propter se et per se celebrata.
nichil sibi ad tribuens. leniter.
suauiter. uerecunde et humi
liter referebat. quia uirtutum
iactanciam fugere. uirtutis
loco ducebat. Unde et post hui
uirtutis tam humilem et ni

chil omnino de
recitationem. q
diceret. ne ma
lationum exto
est michi stim
angelus satha
phizet. statim
que subsecuta
uere stimulu
ciam tocius ca
tationem.

Post hec in
post mul
tationem. ma
rum inuasit
mee cum sang
medullis ema
cera mea inf
totumque corp
sicut herbe u
in hyeme pe
nequam spiri
bant chachin
Vach ista n
eius flebun
confundit. E
anime mee
Infirmitaten
quam quadr
tes paciebar
uisione mi
quod qualsd
spiritualium
ac mulierum

the priest. He blew onto the font with the words with which the Holy Spirit imbued the minds of men and the doctors of the Church, when the spirit of God stirred the waters, at the first creation - as it is written, 'And the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters'. That woman was present, and seized with great fear, beat the ground with her feet, and often emitted a blast from the terrible spirit that oppressed her. Then in true vision, I saw and heard that the might of the Most High, who always and ever brooded over holy baptism said to the devilish accumulation by which the woman was worn out: 'Come Satan, from the temple of this woman's body and make room in it for the Holy Spirit'. Then the wicked spirit emerged, together with a terrible voiding, from the woman's private parts. Thus was she freed, and remained sound in body and mind for the rest of her life. When this was afterwards told to the people, they all said, with songs of praise and words of prayer, 'Glory to thee, O Lord.' So God allowed Satan to inflict the horrible filth of worms on Job's entire body. He thought by this device to deny God's honour, that he might be able to overcome him. But he could not touch Job's soul, with God guarding it. Since Job did not lose his faith in God, Satan, thus defeated, departed from him. So God overcame Satan through him, so that he knew no one could be stronger than God. Likewise, when this woman was handed over to be tried by the wicked spirit, God did not allow her soul to fail in good faith. Thus the enemy was vanquished in her, since he could not turn her from God's justice.

XXIII. That she was gravely ill for forty days and when she took the words of God to certain religious she was better.

In these words and others like them, the nun, attributing nothing to herself, would gently, sweetly, modestly and humbly refer the works by which and for which she was renowned, to the divine mercy of God. For she thought she should shun a display of virtues, in the place of virtue itself. Thus after such a humble and unassuming account of her

chil omnino de se presumentis recitationem. quasi cum apostolo diceret. ne magnitudo reuelationum extollat me. datus est michi stimulus carnis mee angelus sathane qui me colaphizet. statim subnectit eam que subsecuta se fuit. quasi uere stimulus contra extollenciam tocius carnis sue debilitationem.

Post hec inquit nimirum post mulieris illius liberationem. magna egritudo iterum inuasit me. ita quod uene mee cum sanguine. ossa cum medullis emarcuerunt. et uiscera mea infra me distracta sunt. totumque corpus ita elanguit. sicut herbe uiriditatem suam in hyeme perdunt. Et uidi quod nequam spiritus inde irridebant chachinnando dicentes. Wach ista morietur et amici eius flebunt cum quibus nos confundit. Ego autem exitum anime mee adesse non uidi. Infirmitatem autem istam plus quam quadraginta dies et noctes paciebar. Inter hec in uera uisione michi ostensum fuit quod quasdam congregationes spiritualium hominum uirorum ac mulierum inuiserem. eisque uerba que deus michi ostenderet. aperte manifestarem. Quod dum tandem facere temptarem. nec uires corporis haberem. infirmitas mea aliquantum lenita est. et preceptum dei exequens. dissensiones quas quidam inter se habebant sedaui. Has uias quas michi deus precepit cum negligerem propter populi timorem. dolores corporis sunt michi aucmentati. nec cessabant quousque obediui. sicut et ione contigit. qui ualde afflictus fuit. quousque ad obedienciam se reclinauit.

Quod pulcherrimum iuuenem uidit qui demones a se et omnem infirmitatem fugauit. XXIIII.

Supernam post hec sponsa Christi meruit uisitationem qua tantam percepit consolationem. ut ex eius delectatione diceret se repletam fuisse inestimabilis gaudii exultatione.

Pulcherrimus uisio VIII. inquit et amantissimus uir in uisione ueritatis michi apparuit. qui tante consolationis fuit. quod omnia uiscera mea uelut odore balsami eius aspectus perfudit. Tunc gaudio magno et inestimabili exultabam. semperque perspicere

power, it was as if she said, with the Apostle: 'Lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me.' She followed this with a description of what happened to her next - the enfeeblement of her entire body - indeed a goad against exaltation.

"After this", she said, "indeed, after the liberation of this woman, a great sickness came upon me once more, so that the blood in my veins and the marrow in my bones shrivelled, and my innards were divided inside me. My whole body grew feeble, just as grass loses its freshness in winter. And I saw foul spirits, saying with mocking laughter, 'Wach, she will die, and her friends will weep, who help her confound us.' Yet I did not see that the time for my soul's departure was at hand. I suffered this illness for more than forty days and nights. During this time I was directed in true vision, to visit certain religious communities of men and women and to reveal openly to them the words that God had shown me. When I tried to do this, although not strong in body, my illness was somewhat lightened, and following God's instruction, I settled their internal quarrels. When I neglected these paths which God enjoined on me, for fear of the people, the pains of my body were increased and did not cease till I obeyed. This also happened to Jonah, who was greatly tormented, until he bowed himself in obedience."

XXIIII. That she saw a most beautiful youth, who banished the demons and all illness from her.

After this, the bride of Christ merited a divine visitation from which she received such comfort that she said its delightfulness filled her with the exultation of immeasurable joy. "A most beautiful and loving man," she said, "appeared to me in a vision of truth, which was of such great consolation, that the look of him filled me to the core with an odour like balsam. Then I exulted with great and immeasurable joy, desiring to look upon him always. And he ordered the demons which beset

desiderabam. Et ipse hos qui
me afflixerunt precepit ut a me
discederent dicens. Abscedite quia
nolo ut eam amplius sic torque
atis. Qui magno ululatu rece
dentes clamabant. Ach quod
huc uenimus. quia confusi
recedimus. Mox egritudo que
me inquietauerat uelut aque
per procellosos uentos inundati
one commouentur ad uerba ui
ri me dereliquit. et uires rece
pi. quemadmodum peregrinus
cum ad patriam reuertitur.
possessiones suas recolligit. at
que uene cum sanguine. ossa
cum medullis. in me reparata
sunt. quasi de morte suscita
ta fuissem. At ego tacita in pa
ciencia silui in mansuetudine.
et sicut pariens post laborem.
ita loquebar post dolorem.

Quod rogata ab abbate suo
XXV et fratribus scripsit uitam
sancti disibodi in uisione ostensam est.

Post hec ab abbate meo et fra
tribus humillima instan
cia et deuotione coacta sum ut
uitam sancti dysibodi cui prius
oblata eram ut deus uellet
scriberem. quia nichil certi inde
haberent. Et oratione cum inuo
catione spiritus sancti premissa ad ueram
sapientiam in uera uisione commo
nita perspexi ac secundum quod
ipsa me docuit. uitam et merita
ipsius sancti conscripsi. Deinde librum
diuinorum operum scripsi. in quo
ut omnipotens deus mihi infudit
altitudinem profunditatem et la
titudinem firmamenti uidi. et quomodo
sol et luna stelle et cetera in illo
constituta sunt.

Quod librum operum diuinorum et
multas scripturas reliquit et quod
quinque demoniacas liberauit. XXVI

Multa et alia scripturarum moni
menta et insignia prophetice
gracie documenta sancta uirgo
confecit. sicut superius diximus.
in quibus a spiritu sancto anime ac diui
nis dedite disciplinis indicia col
ligimus. Plurimum enim emolu
menti in eis inueniri possunt qui
amorem doctrine et sciencie gerunt.
ut pote que adeo ordinata et per
ipsam hominibus sunt propalata.
in qua dei sapiencia quasi in solio
potencie sublimi auctoritate se
debat. et per eam mirabilia faciens.
rerum iudicia decernebat.

His pro ut possibilitas ingenioli
suppetebat a nobis digestis.
calamum ad uerba sanctarum filiarum
eius uertamus. et que de ipsa me
moratu digna scripserunt. maxi
me de beato transitu eius sicut
uiderunt et audierunt et ma

me to depart from me, saying, 'Depart, because I do not wish you to torture her any more like this.' And going off, they cried out with loud lament, 'Ach, that we came here only to depart in disarray.' The illness which had disturbed me soon left me at the words of this man, like the waters that are moved to floods by stormy winds, and I recovered my strength. Just as the pilgrim, returning to his native land, comes into his own again, so the blood in my veins, and the marrow of my bones was restored as if I had been raised from the dead. And I endured in silence and calmly held my peace, and as a woman speaks when she has been delivered, so I spoke after my pain."

XXV. That at the request of her abbot and the monks she wrote the Life of St Disibod, shown her in a vision. "After this I was urged by my abbot and the brothers, with humble and devout importunity, to write the life of St Disibod, to whom I had first been offered, as God wished, because they knew nothing certain about him. And uttering a prayer with an invocation to the Holy Spirit, I looked to true Wisdom, in a true recollected vision. According to what it taught me, I wrote the life and merits of the saint. Then I wrote the book Divinorum Operum, in which I saw the height, depth and breadth of the heavens and how the sun, moon and stars and other things are set in it, as Almighty God inspired me."

XXVI. That she left the book of God's works and many writings and that she freed five women possessed by the devil. The holy nun composed many other writings and wonderful documents of prophetic grace, as we said above, in which we gather evidence of her mind informed by the Holy Spirit and of knowledge divinely given.Those who have a love of learning and knowledge can find great rewards in them, because they are ordained by God and conveyed to man through her. Here the Wisdom of God, as if sitting in authority on the throne of sublime power, and working wonders through her, pronounced judgements on things. Now we have set down these matters, as far as the capacity of our small wit allows, let us turn our pen to the words of her holy daughters. And we will truly and faithfully add to this work what they wrote about her which deserved to be remembered, especially about her

nibus tractauerunt adiuuante
dno fideliter et ueracit huic opi
annectamus.

Mulierem inquiunt quandam
acriter a demonio muto uexa
tam sup quam et frs de lacu pluri
mum laborauerunt. cum ad se magno
labore uirorum in lecto deportata eet.
pia mater audacie et psumptioni
demonis uerbis a spu sco prolatis
confidenter resistens. ab orationib3
et benedictionib3 n cessauit. quo
usq3 p gram dei ab hoste maligno
eam liberauit.

Simili modo et alia mulier que
pt furore insanie ditis uin
culis ligata fuit. cum ad se adducta
fuisset solui eam monuit. et statim
sub admiratione omnium q aderant.
sanitate mentis et corpis recepta.
cum gratiarum actione remeauit ad pa.

Item de claustro schefeneburch.
sororem quandam diabolus ad sca opa.
orationes. uigilias. et ieiunia. ad
pceptionem quoq3 sacramentorum si
mulans se ee angelum lucis horta
batur. et criminalium confessione
qb3 nunquam subiacuerat confunde
eam nitebatur. Inter que etiam eam ita
afflixit. quod noia et aspectum quorum
dam hoim et animalium intantum
abhorrebat. et qd ipsis uisis uel
auditis horribili uoce p longam
horam pstrepebat. Hec a priore et
quentu cum litteris ad scam uirginem
missa. ab ea et confortata. et a diabo
li errore est liberata.

Eadem uirtute alias duas mulie
res a demonio liberauit. quarum
una cum eet paupercula et ceca in ele
mosinam est recepta. et in spuali
habitu uitam felicit consummauit.

De felici transitu suo et de signis
que apparuerunt in obitu suo. XXVII.

His ita pmissis. quia ad finem huius
opis festinamus. finem quoq3 fer
uide sce uirginis qb3 signis ds
illustrauerit. sicut pfate sorores
eum descripserunt uideamus. Cum
beata inquiunt mater dno mul
tis laborum certaminib3 deuote mi
litasset. uite psentis tedio affec
ta. et dissolui et esse cum xpo cotti
die cupiebat. Cuius desiderium ds
exaudiens finem suum sicut popta
uerat spu pphie ei reuelauit.
que et sororib3 pdixit. Aliquandiu
itaq3 infirmitate laborans octo
ginta. ii. etatis sue anno. xv. kl
octobris ad sponsum celestem felici
transitu migrauit. Filie autem ip
sius quarum omne gaudium et solacium
in ipsa erat. funeri dilecte ma
tris amarissime flentes assiste
bant. Nam licet de pmissis eius et de
suffragiis s. p ipsam conferendis
n dubitarent. pt dis cessionem
tam eius p quam [illegible] semp con

blessed passing, just what they saw and heard and did with their own hands, with God's help. They said that a woman, sorely troubled by a mute demon, over whom the brothers of Laach had laboured greatly, had been carried in a litter, by the labour of many men. The holy mother, steadfastly confronting the boldness and presumption of the demon, with words offered by the Holy Spirit, did not cease from prayers and blessings, until, by the grace of God, she freed the woman from the wicked enemy. In the same way, she ordered another woman to be set free, who, because of her madness, had been brought to her, bound in heavy chains. Hildegard ordered her to be set free; to the wonder of all who were there, the health of her body and mind was immediately restored and giving thanks she returned home. Likewise a devil in the guise of an angel of light was urging a nun from the cloister of Schefenburg to holy works, prayers, vigils, fasts and the taking of the sacraments and he tried to disconcert her into confessing to sins she had not committed. And while he harrassed her in this way, she held the name and aspect of certain men and beasts in such horror that she would rave with a terrible noise for hours on end when she saw or heard them. When she was sent to the holy nun by the prior and convent with a letter, she was comforted and freed from her diabolical error. By the same power Hildegard freed two other women from a devil. One of them, a poor blind woman, was received into the order by her charity and happily finished her life in the religious habit.

XXVII. About her happy passing and the signs which appeared at her death.

Having covered all this, since we are hastening to the end of this work, let us see also the kinds of signs with which God glorified the end of the life of the holy nun, as the sisters described it. They said that when the holy mother had been fighting for the Lord, devoutly and with many hard struggles, weary of this present life, she desired every day to be released and to be with Christ. Hearing this desire, God revealed her end to her in the spirit of prophecy, just as she had hoped, and she predicted it to the sisters. Amd so, after being ill for some time, in the eighty-second year of her life, on 17th September, she made the joyful transition to the heavenly Bridegroom. Her daughters, whose sole joy and comfort had been in her, attended the funeral of their beloved mother weeping most bitterly. For although they did not doubt her worth and the approbation conferred upon them by

solabantur. maximo cordis merore afficiebantur. Us uero cuius meriti apud se esset in transitu suo euidenter declarauit. Nam supra habitaculum in quo sancta ugo primo crepusculo noctis dominice diei, feliciter animam deo reddidit. duo lucidissimi et diuersi coloris arcus in firmamento apparuerunt. qui ad magnitudinem magne platee se dilatauerunt. in quatuor partes terre se extendentes. quorum alter ab aquilone ad austrum. alter ab oriente ad occidentem procedebant. At in summitate ubi hi duo arcus iungebantur. clara lux ad quantitatem lunaris circuli emergebat. que late se extendens tenebras noctis ab habitaculo depellere uidebatur. In hac luce crux rutilans uisa est. primum parua. sed crescendo postea inmensa. circa quam innumerabiles uarii coloris circuli. in quibus singulis singule rutilantes cruciculae oriebantur. cum circulis suis crescentes. priore tamen minore conspiciebantur. Et cum hec in firmamento se dilatassent. latitudine sua ad orientem magis pertingebant et ad terram uersus domum in qua sancta ugo transierat declinare uise totum montem clarificabant. Et credendum quod hoc signo deus ostendit. quanta claritate dilectam suam in celestibus illustrauerit. Nec defuerunt antequam sepeliretur miracula meritum sanctitatis eius ad testancia. Nam duo homines qui sanctum corpus eius spe bona tangere presumpserunt. a graui infirmitate conualuerunt. Exequiis quoque uenerabiliter a reuerendis uiris celebratis. in uenerando loco est sepulta. ubi meritis eius omnibus pio corde querentibus prestantur beneficia. Odor quoque nimie suauitatis de sepulchro eius redolens. dulcedinis sue flagrancia aliquorum hominum nares perfudit et pectora. Speramus itaque et indubitanter credimus. apud deum eius esse memoriam immortalem. qui et in hac uita donorum suorum prerogatiuam ei contulerat specialem. cuius laus sit et honor in secula seculorum AMEN.

Explicit liber tercius de miraculis sancte hildegardis uirginis.

Epistole bea
De causis p qu
sue artibus se
In uera uisior
queritis. et de
artis per quam
gestionibus s
Nam quia dia
fallacis decept
peccata ipsoru
homines a cap
spicit. utrum
abrenunciem
ad eos currit
clinauerint
quoque eos in
fictilia uasa
adtendit. et
primo ortu
illorum astu
recedit. quon
cio suo exorta
magne pest
quidam hom
sanguis. m
in sanguin
obstupescun
et ideo clan
saniendo. q
licatum a
unde etiam
ad se loqu
lis non su
non contra
mabiliter

her, nevertheless they felt great sorrow in their hearts because of the loss of one who was ever their comforter. But God showed clearly the kinds of merits she had, in her passing. For above the dwelling in which the holy nun gave up her happy soul to God, at the first darkness of Sunday, two brilliant multi-coloured arcs of light appeared in the sky. The width of a broad street, they extended to the four corners of the earth, one from north to south, the other from east to west. But at the apex, where the two arcs intersected, a bright light appeared, the size of the full moon, which throwing its light widely, seemed to banish the darkness of night from her dwelling. In this light, a glowing Cross was seen - small at first, but afterwrds growing enormous. Around this countless circles of various colours were seen, and in each and every one, a small cross shining, growing with the circles, the first being smaller. And while they were spreading over the sky, they were concentrated in the east and were seen to reach down to the ground, opposite the house where the holy nun died, illuminating the whole mountain. And it should be believed that God showed by this sign how very greatly he had glorified his beloved in the heavens. Nor did miracles attesting to the worth of her sanctity cease before she was buried. For two men who presumed in good faith to touch her holy body were healed of a serious illness. When her funeral had been reverently performed by pious men, she was buried in a place worthy of veneration, where the benefits of her merits are available to all those who seek with devout hearts. And a perfume of wondrous sweetness, emanating from her tomb, fills the noses and breasts of all with its sweet fragrance. Therefore we hope, and believe without doubt, that her immortal memory is with God, who in this life conferred on her the special tokens of his gifts. To him be praise and honour for ever and ever. Amen.

Here ends the third book, concerning the miracles of the holy nun Hildegard.

Marginal additions from f.21$^{r}$, p. (41) above

(above first column) And flee in terror at his command. Hear him who Is, speaking: I who am without beginning, but from whom all beginnings flow, say that I am of myself the day which never proceeded from the sun, but by which the sun is kindled. I am also the reason which does not take its sound from another but from which all rationality takes its being.

(column 2) ...I consider... of my antiquity which will never fail. I have prepared the breaths, singing praises in unison, as I have a voice like thunder, with which I move the whole world in the living sounds of created things.

(below first column) And let that priest, as well as the other six priests standing around her with their rods strike her lightly with their rods - on the head and on the back, on the breast and stomach and loins and knees and feet and let them say: Now, O thou Satan, and wicked spirit who torments and oppresses this person who bears a woman's form, through him who lives and who offers these words through a person untaught by human instruction, you are commanded, and he himself commands you, to depart in his name from the person here present, whom you have long tormented and in whom you still remain. And therefore, with this rod, in the command of the true beginning, that is to say, in that beginning (2 or 3 lines missing)...

(foot of column 2)...harm him further. Conjured and vanquished, even by the sacrifice and prayers and help of Abel, in whose name we also strike you. And let them strike her again, as above. Conjured and vanquished even by the sacrifice and prayers and help of Noah, in whose name we strike you. And let them strike her again. Conjured and vanquished even by the sacrifice and prayers and help of Abraham, in whose name we strike you, and let them strike her as above.

Conjured and vanquished even by the sacrifice and prayers of Melchisidech, in whose name we strike you. And let them strike her as above. Conjured and vanquished even by the sacrifice and prayers (and help of Jacob in whose) name we strike you. And (let them strike) her (as above)... end of column 2, at least 2 lines excised.

(right hand margin)...of God, to whom all true priests have sacrificed and still offer sacrifices, in whose name and power we strike you again. And let them strike her again. So that, in that same confounding where at your first appearance, you fell like lead from the heavens, depart in confusion from this person and do not harm her further. But may the height which never height touched, and the depth which never depth fathomed, and the breadth which never breadth comprehended, free her from your filth, foolish wickedness and harsh abominations. So flee from her in confusion so that she neither knows nor feels you, and just as you were cut off from heaven, may the Holy Spirit cut you off from her; and as you are a stranger to all happiness so may you be a stranger to her; and as you never long for God, so may you never long to come to her. Flee, therefore, flee, flee from her, O devil, with all your wicked aerial spirits, adjured by the might and power which created all things and which made man, and through the kindness of the saviour of mankind who freed the first man, and through the fiery love which made man never failing life. Vanquished also by the suffering on the wood of the holy rood, and through the resurrection of life, and through the force with which he threw the devil from heaven into hell and freed man from his power, so may you, in that confusion in which you, at your first appearance fell like lead from heaven, depart in confusion from this person and harm her no longer in her soul or in any parts of her body. Ordered by the Almighty who made and created her. AMEN. If (the demon is) not (yet driven out) let the second priest, with the other priests standing by, follow the same ritual until God comes to her aid.